Unit 3

Outbound Calls: Interacting with Customer

INTRODUCTION

At Outbound Call Centres, the calls are started by a Customer Support Representative (CSR), with their main goal being to provide services and sell a product to a customer. In other words, an Outbound Call Centre's main responsibility as a call centre agent, includes making outgoing calls to a bulk of people to offer services.

On behalf of an organisation, a CSR can call for a variety of reasons including performing customer support, sales and survey research. On the other hand, Inbound Call Centres focus only on receiving calls.

The main purpose of an outbound call can vary from one project to another. Here are some types of outbound calls and the nature of work.

Basically, several Outbound Call Centre services are direct mail, follow-up, production promotion, debt collection, appointment scheduling and up-sell/cross-sell campaigns. Outbound multinational companies are insurance and telecommunications, banking and finance, tourism, travel industry and hotels.

Interacting with Customers

Common Vocabulary of a Domestic BPO

Fig. 3.1: Abandoned Call

Here is a list of the common vocabulary used in the Domestic BPO. You will learn to pronounce it, read its meaning and use it in a sentence to understand its usage and improve your vocabulary.

Abandoned call is also called a lost call. If the caller hangs up before the call reaches a CSR, it is an abandoned call.

Example: 'Out of the six calls, four were abandoned calls.'

Adherence to schedule is a general term that refers to how well CSRs adhere to their schedules. It includes

(a) time spent on taking calls during a shift, including the time spent in handling calls and waiting for arrival calls.

(b) the amount of time a CSR was available to take calls.

Example: 'I had a good day today. I was able to adhere to the schedule well.'

After-Call Work (ACW) is also called Wrap-up and Post-Call Processing (PCP). It is the work that a CSR must do immediately after an inbound transaction. It often includes entering data, filling out forms and making outbound calls, necessary to complete the transaction. While the CSR is doing ACW, they are unavailable to receive another inbound call.

*Example:* 'I have to do my ACW properly.'

Agent is a person who handles incoming or outgoing calls. They are also referred to as CSR, Telephone Sales or Service Representative (TSR), associate, consultant, engineer, operator, technician, account executive, team member, customer service professional, staff member, attendant and specialist.

Example: 'This is the accounts section, Sir. I will connect you to a customer service agent.'

Fig. 3.2: BPO agent

Agent group, also called split, gate, queue or skills group, an agent group is a group that shares a common set of skills.
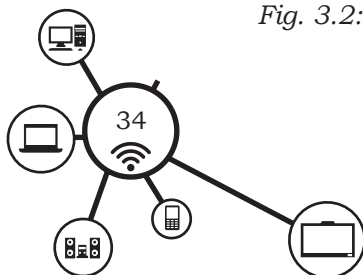
For example, there could be an agent group to handle customer complaints.

Example: 'ABC Company has 11 agent groups to handle the different processes.'

Agent Out Call is an outbound call placed by an agent.

Example: 'I have made 11 Agent Out Calls till now.'

Answered supervision is the signal sent by the Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) or other device to the local or long distance carrier to accept a call. That is when billing for either the caller or the Call Centre will begin, if long distance charges apply.

Example: 'The Agent took the call because she got the Answered Supervision signal.'

Answered call is when a call reaches an agent.

Example: 'In the last hour, we recorded the largest number of answered calls today. Congratulations!'
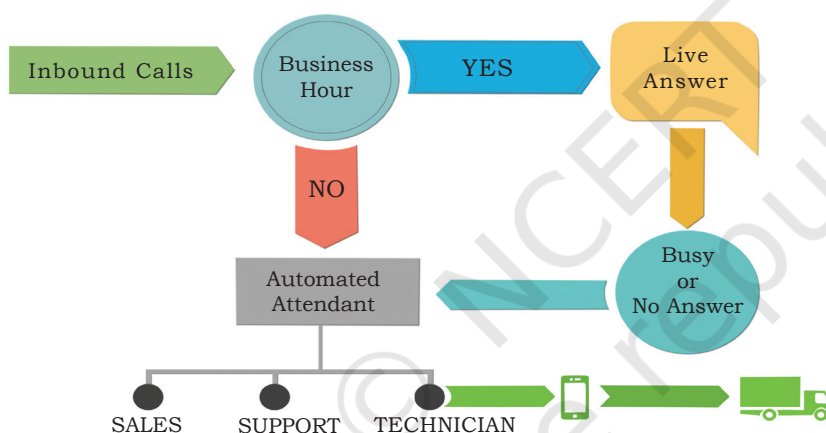

Fig. 3.3: Group of Agents

Fig. 3.4: Inbound calls

Audiotex is a voice processing capability that enables callers to automatically access pre-recorded announcements.

Example: 'The caller will first encounter the audiotex (pre-recorded calls) for new schemes of the company.'

Auto Wrap-up is an ACD feature whereby the program automatically puts agents into ACW after they finish 'talk-time' and disconnect calls.

Example: 'Something seems wrong with the auto wrap-up program. I am getting calls as I do my ACW.'

Automated attendant are the prompts you hear when you make a call to a BPO, such as press 1 for
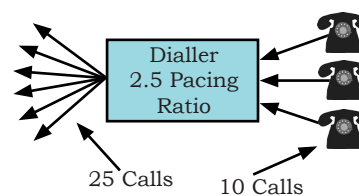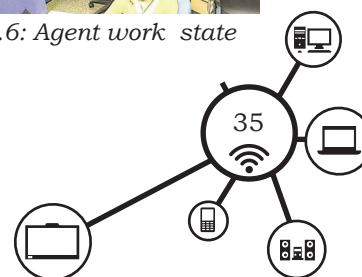

Fig. 3.5: Auto Wrap-up
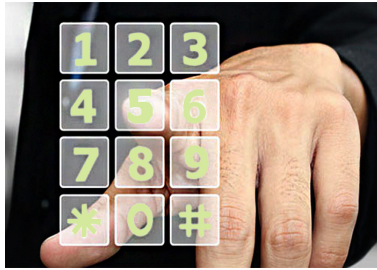

Fig. 3.6: Agent work state

Fig. 3.7: Automated Attendant

sales, 2 for support and so on. The system prompts callers to respond to choices and then coordinates with the ACD to send callers to specific destinations. This voice processing capability that automates the attendant function is Automated Attendant.

Example: 'The Automated Attendant is being updated to include the new promotion and it will be ready by tomorrow.'

Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) is the underlying factor for any Call Centre application. ACD offers a method for distributing incoming calls efficiently and equitably among available agents. With ACD, incoming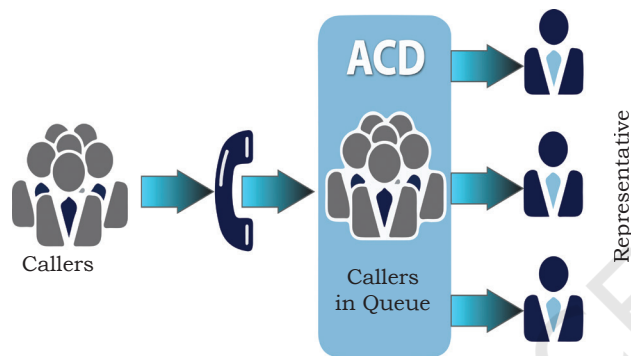 calls can be directed to the first idle or most idle agent within a group of agents. Agents in an ACD environment are assigned to a hunt group—a group of agents handling the same type of calls. A track group is especially useful when you expect a high number of calls to a particular phone number. A track group might consist of people trained to handle calls on specific topics.

Fig. 3.8: Automatic Call Distribution

Example: 'The ACD is central to a Call Centre application.'

Work state is typically not associated with handling telephone calls. When agents are in support mode, they will not receive inbound calls.

Example: 'How many agents are in a support Work State at any point of time?'

Average Handle Time (AHT) is the sum of the Average Talk Time and Average ACW for a specified time period.

Example: 'What was the group's AHT today?'

Beep tone is an audible notification that a call has arrived also called Zip Tone. Beep tone can also refer to the audible notification that a call is being monitored.

Example: 'There's the first beep tone of the day!'

Busy hour is a term used to indicate the telephone trunk. It refers to the hour of time in which a trunk group carries the most trunks during the day. The average busy hour reflects the average over a period of days, such as two weeks. Busy hour has little use for incoming call centres, which require more specific resource calculation methodologies.

Fig. 3.9: Beep tone
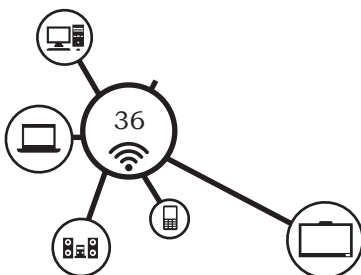
Example: Usually mid-day hours are called busy hours.

Call blending combines traditionally separate inbound and outbound agent groups into one group of agents responsible for handling both inbound and outbound contacts. A system that is capable of call blending automatically puts agents who are making outbound calls into the inbound mode and vice versa, as per the incoming call load.

Example: 'Today, we will have to resort to call blending as the new promotion will increase the incoming call load.'

Call-by-call routing is the process of routing each call to the optimum destination according to real-time conditions.

Example: Usually all agents get calls through call-by-call routing.

Call forcing is an ACD feature that automatically delivers calls to agents who are available and ready to take calls. They hear a notification that the call has arrived, for example, a beep tone, but do not have to press a button to answer the call.

Example: Three agents are available for call forcing.

Calls in queue is a real-time report that refers to the number of calls received by the ACD system but not yet connected to an agent as we see in Figure 3.8.

Example: 'The calls-in-queue report is being sent by e-mail for you to check.'

Collateral duties are non-phone tasks, such as data entry that are flexible and can be scheduled for periods when call load is slow.

Example: 'I am waiting for some free time to finish my collateral duties.'

Conditional routing is the capability of the ACD to route calls based on current conditions. It is based on 'if-then' programming statements. For example, "if the number of calls in agent group one exceeds 10 and there are at least two available agents in group two, then route the calls to group two."

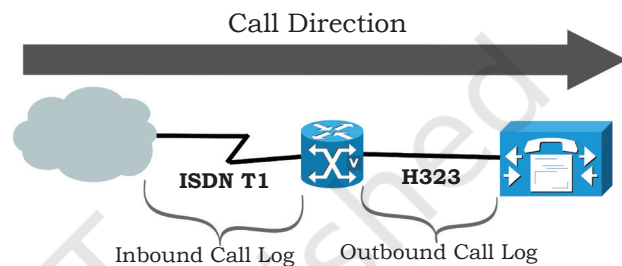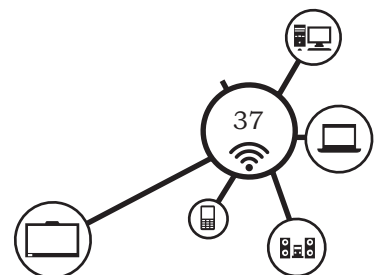*Example:* 'Group two took several conditionally routed calls.'

Fig. 3.10: Call-by-Call Routing

Call Direction

ISDN T1   H323

Inbound Call Log   Outbound Call Log

Database call handling is an application, whereby the ACD works in sync with the database computer to process calls, based on information in the database. For example, a caller inputs digits into a voice processing system, the database retrieves information of that customer and then issues instructions to the ACD on how to handle the call. For example, where to route the call, what priority the call should be given in queue, the announcements to play.

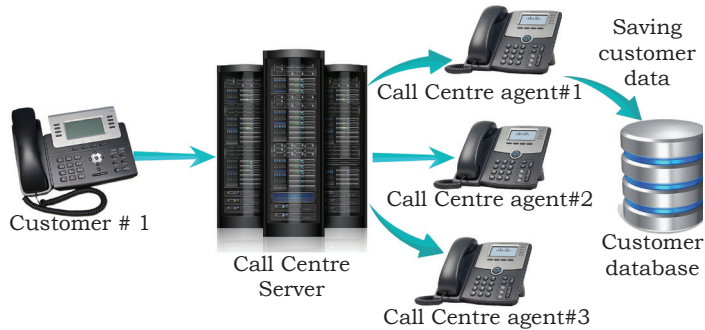

Fig. 3.11: Database Call Handling

Example: CRM is aided by database call handling.

Delay is also called Queue Time. The time a caller spends in queue, waiting for an agent to become available. Average Delay is the same thing as Average Speed of Answer.

Example: Too many delays means callers are not being served.

Delay announcements are recorded announcements that encourage callers to wait for an agent to become available, remind them to have their account number ready and provide information on access alternatives. In some systems, delay announcements are provided through recorded announcement routes (RANs).

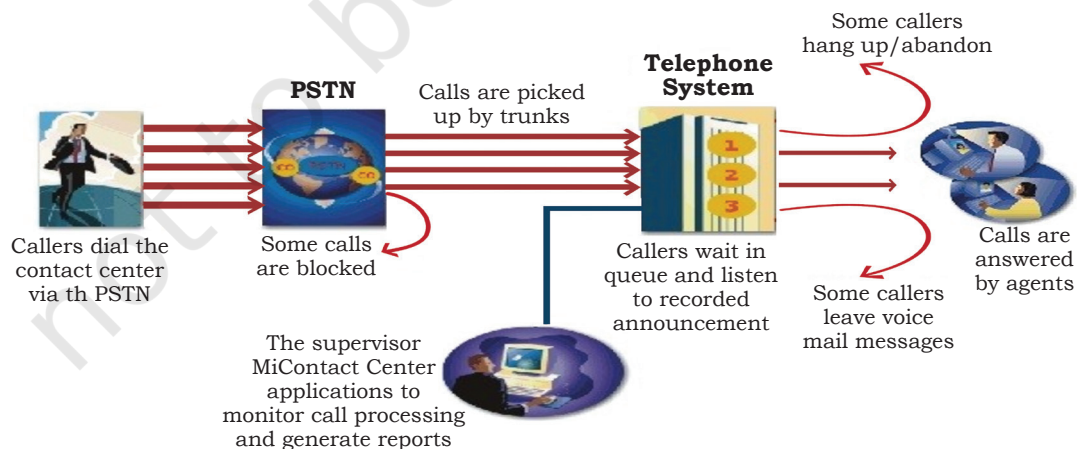*Example:* The caller has to listen to delay announcements for 2-3 minutes.
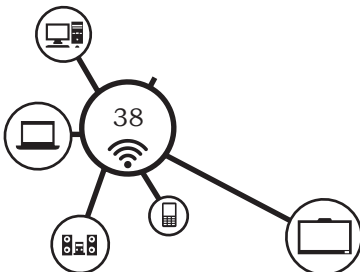

Fig. 3.12: Delay Announcements

Error rate is either the number of defective transactions or the number of defective steps in a transaction.

Effectiveness of agent is determined by their error rate.

Fast clear down is when a caller hangs up immediately after hearing a delay in announcement.

To Make a Good First Impression

Here are some basic points that tell you how to create a good first impression with people in general:

- Be well groomed: Dress neatly. Maintain personal hygiene.
- Be polite: Use polite expressions, such as 'please', 'thank you', 'could I', 'may I' and so on.
- Show positive body language: Smile and have a pleasant face.

Fig. 3.13: CSR with Impression

- Always be punctual: If you have promised to see someone at a certain time at a certain place, honour the commitment. Do not make people wait. If you are late, call up to inform about the delay.
- Be helpful: Offer help whenever you can. Be courteous.
- Switch off mobile phones when in discussions: Keep your phone switched off or on the silent mode when you attend an interview or an important discussion. If you must take the call, then say 'excuse me, may I take this call please' before answering the call.

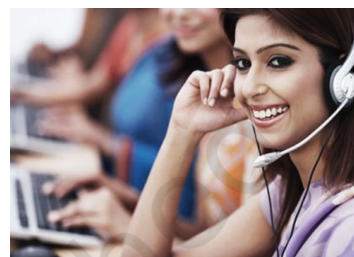1. **While opening the call**
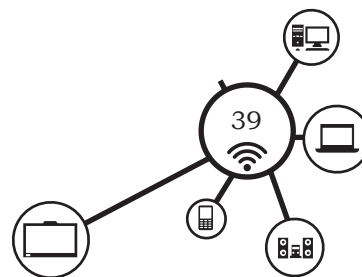
   (a) Greet in a cheerful voice.

2. During the call
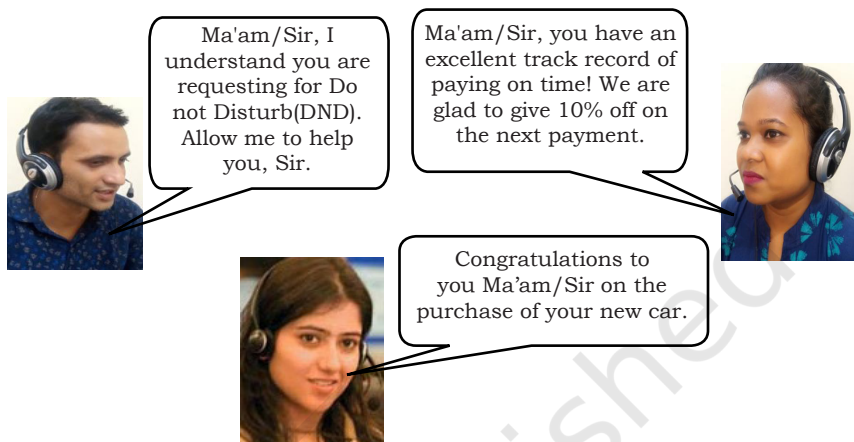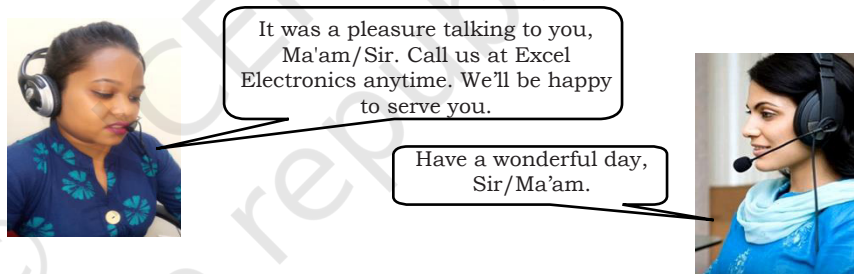
   (a) Empathise with the customer.

   (b) Register the customer's request.

   (c) Extend excellent service at all times, which includes all telephone etiquette to be followed.

Ma'am/Sir, I understand you are requesting for Do not Disturb(DND). Allow me to help you, Sir.

Ma'am/Sir, you have an excellent track record of paying on time! We are glad to give 10% off on the next payment.

Congratulations to you Ma'am/Sir on the purchase of your new car.

3. While closing the call

It was a pleasure talking to you, Ma'am/Sir. Call us at Excel Electronics anytime. We'll be happy to serve you.

Have a wonderful day, Sir/Ma'am.

All the above phrases when said in the right tone and with the right expression make the customer feel good and cared for. It creates a good impression not only about yourself but also about the company that you are representing.
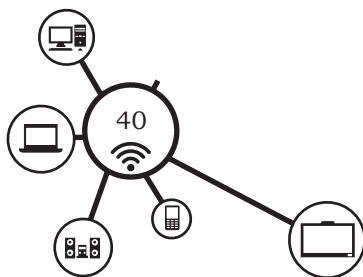
Good first impressions are made with the

- right tone of voice.
- correct choice of words used.
- service you provide.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO PEERS AND BOSSES

How would you introduce yourself to your peers? Is it the same as introducing yourself to your boss?

Example 1: Ajay introduces himself to Riya and Diya.

Ajay: "Hi, I am Ajay and I have just joined. I am excited! And I would love to get some tips from you guys on how to work here."

Example 2: Now let us see how to introduce yourself to your seniors. While introducing yourself to your bosses, be respectful yet friendly. For example, Diya introduces herself to Sameer, a senior manager.

Diya: Good morning, Sir. My name is Diya. I have just joined and I am looking forward to learning from you."

Fig. 3.14: Introducing yourself to Peers and Bosses

From the above examples we know that we must be:
- Casual and approachable with peers.
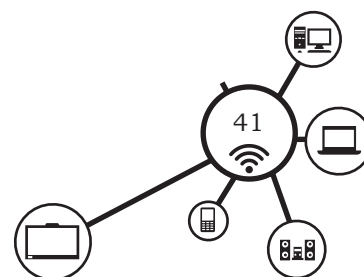- Respectful yet friendly with seniors.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO CUSTOMERS — INBOUND CALLS

If you think introducing yourself to customers is a mere formality, you are wrong. Proper introductions helps to establish a credible and long-term professional relationship. It is important for you to know the correct way to introduce yourself to your customers. Let us see some common ways of introducing oneself to customers while taking inbound calls.

Good afternoon. I am Ajay. Are you calling to place an order, please?

Hello, Access electronics *se main Savita bol rahi hoon. Aap ki kya seva kar sakti hoon*?

Thank you for calling. My name is Diya. How may I help you?

Let us see each sentence one by one.

Diya's Introduction

In case of Diya, she thanks the customer for calling. She then says her name and asks how she may help the customer. This is a standard way of introducing yourself over the phone for all inbound calls.

Ajay's Introduction

You may greet the customer with the correct time of the day. Ajay, being in 'accepting order', also confirms the purpose of the call before reading out his script from the CRM. Sometimes customers may end up calling the wrong service option. So, it is best to take a confirmation before proceeding.

Savita's Introduction

Savita speaks in the local regional language to service a customer who opts to communicate in the local language.

Riya's Introduction

Riya has a slightly uncommon way of opening the call. She sounds cheerful, cuts the ice and makes the customer feel good.

Remember these points for introducing yourself while taking inbound calls:

- **Common Greeting** is a simple and polite way of greeting like 'How may I help you?'
- **Confirm** the purpose of the call, especially for order-taking, where one has to read from a script.
- **Ice-breaker** is a simple question to make the customer feel comfortable.
- **Tone** should be polite but enthusiastic. You should sound happy to be of service.

INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO CUSTOMERS — TELESALE CALLS

The two main areas of outbound calls are telesales and credit collection. In outbound calls, you are calling the customer – you are imposing on the customer's time. So the
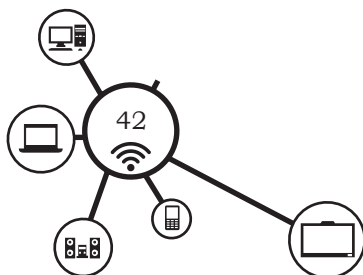
first three seconds of your call will either make or break the situation! Let us see a scenario to understand this better.

Riya makes a call to a customer to sell a cooling system for his office. The customer's name is Paras Rai. Read on to find out more…
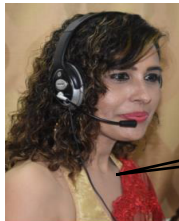
Hello Mr Paras Roy… Mr Roy… I'm calling from the tele-sales department of Access electronics. We have a power saver cooling system, it has high capacity…and you can run 24 hours on full strength.
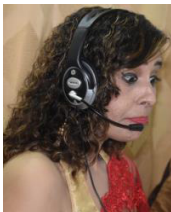
Hey hey.. First of all my name is not Roy…It is Rai.. And by the way, who are you? How did you get my number?

Uh..Sorry, I am Riya… from Access Electronics… we have a cooling system that can run 24 hours…. It has high capacity…..and can run 24 hours on full strength.

The customer cuts the call. Why?

- Riya mispronounced the customer's name.
- She was impatient and rushed into a long monologue about the product.
- She did not ask the customer if it was a good time to talk.

Remember these points while introducing yourself during a telesales call:
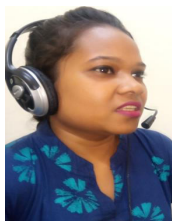
- Cut the ice with the customer.
- Pronounce the customer's name correctly.
- Use salutations, such as Mr, Miss or Mrs to surnames and NOT first names.
- Ask the customer if they have the time to talk. Do not force them into a conversation.
- Put forth the main attractive points of the product, instead of giving a boring speech about the product.
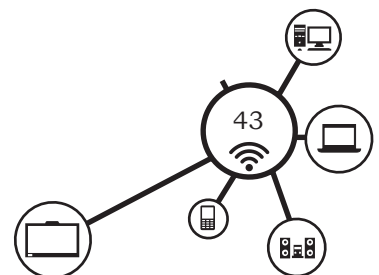
Introducing Yourself to Customers — Collection Calls

The second category of outbound calls is in credit or bill collection. You may be calling to recover an outstanding amount, but you still need to be polite and ask for the right time to talk. Let us see this scenario to understand it better.

> Good afternoon Ma'am/Sir. This is Priyanka from Money Plus Bank. I wanted to give you an update about your payment that is due this month. Is it a good time to talk now Ma'am/Sir?

This is an example of excellent introduction! You can see how Priyanka introduces herself politely after a greeting. She states the purpose of her call and then waits to know if it is a good time to call. She is sure to get a much better response from the customer than a rude or impatient CSR.

Remember these points while introducing yourself during a collection call:

- Greet the customer.
- Introduce yourself politely.
- State the purpose of your call.
- Wait to know if it is a good time to talk.

Tips

- Introducing yourself effectively shows that you take your job seriously and are committed to the job.
- It shows you are competent and professional.
- It shows enthusiasm. If you are enthusiastic about introducing yourself, you appear cheerful to those you introduce yourself to.
- Introducing yourself helps you to become familiar with everyone including your customer.

Know Personal Strengths and Weaknesses

Are you aware of your personal strengths and weaknesses? Not sure, then read on to know about Priyanka, a CSR. You may get some hints.

Priyanka works for BPO. She starts her day early. Before leaving for work, she makes it a point to catch up with her parents on their health and the needs of the household, so that she can pick them up on her way back home from work. Each day, when Priyanka reaches office, the security guard greets her at the gate. But Priyanka stays indifferent. Her behaviour with her peers too, is
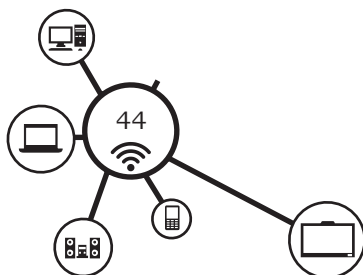
CRM Domestic Voice – Class XI

one of indifference. However, with her Team Leader, she is overtly polite and courteous! Strange! She is particular about her work. She is punctual, organised and precise. Priyanka likes to keep to herself. She does not believe her colleagues are as good as her in terms of work! But if a peer approaches her for help, she does not hesitate.

Even as you read this, you can make out that Priyanka has some positives and some negatives to her personality. Let's classify them as strengths and areas for improvement.

Strengths

- **Disciplined:** Priyanka is an early riser. Her daily routine follows a certain system. At work too, she is punctual and organised.
- **Responsible:** Priyanka feels the burden of running a household. She checks on her parents for their well-being and the needs of the house every day.
- **Respectful of authority:** Priyanka is respectful of authority, which is evident from her behaviour towards her team leader.
- **Helpful:** Priyanka has a helpful nature. She helps her peers.
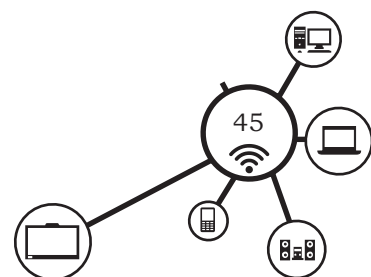
Areas for Improvement

- **Lacking in civility:** Priyanka seems to be mindful of whom she interacts with! She does not seem to be able to treat all classes and sections of society with equal regard and consideration. This is evident from the way she ignores the regular greetings of the security guard of her office.
- **Indifferent towards peers:** Priyanka's attitude towards peers is to be condemned. While she is respectful of authority, she seems to be completely indifferent to her peers. This is surely not the quality of a team player!

Compose 'Strengths'

Would you like to do a self-check on your strengths and areas for improvements now? If you possess these qualities, then they are your strengths:

- **Ability to learn new things:** If you are a quick learner then it is a strength.
- **Communication skills:** Effective communication skills is a strength you must develop. As a CSR has to make and receive calls, good listening and speaking skills are the only way to be successful.
- **Self-motivation and focus:** If you can motivate yourself and stay focussed without getting distracted, it is a sure strength.
- **Team player:** You cannot work in isolation. In today's world, a person needs to be a good team player. The team's success will be your success. Be a team player and make it your strength.
- **Hard-working:** Success is 90 per cent hardwork and 10 per cent brain work. Be hardworking and make that your strength.
- **Self-confidence:** Your self-confidence is the reflection of your behaviour. It shows that you are not afraid of challenges and take them head on. If you are confident, you become reliable.
- **Patience:** As a CSR, you must develop this strength. You are expected to handle over 200 calls in a day, most of which will be irate calls. You have to be patient and deal with them.

Ways to Overcome Weaknesses

Glorifying our strengths while ignoring our weaknesses can be dangerous. Weakness is nothing to be ashamed of; it is a part of human nature. We always want to know what works best for us and what will help us reach our goals. It is not weakness but strength that will take us where we want to go. First, we need to identify our weaknesses and then find ways to turn them into strengths. Here are some weaknesses you may have and how to overcome them.

Anger is just one word away from danger. It can consume you and shatter your personal and professional life. Control your anger.

Arrogance is when you think you know everything. That is when you weaken yourself because you stop learning. You are also easily hurt when someone
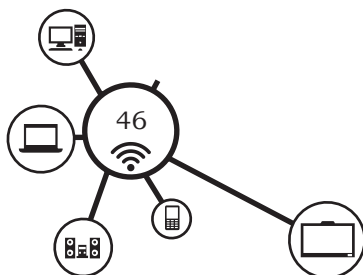
criticises you. This hampers your growth. Take others' opinions positively as an opportunity to improve yourself and be open to learning new things.

Ingratitude is the failure to be grateful for what we have. It comes in the way of our happiness, weakens relationships and blocks good things from entering our lives. Live with a grateful heart and you will live a long and happy life.

Insecurity makes you feel inferior to others. This weakness will de-motivate you and make you jealous of others. Instead learn from others, what you lack.

Being unorganised can damage your career. You have to be organised while doing your work. Being organised will help you manage your time effectively and make you more efficient.

Negative attitude will lead you to destruction. It slowly pulls oneself in, first with people, then with work, then with situations and finally consumes you.

Everyone has personal weaknesses. Those of us who are wise, recognise them and try to overcome these character flaws. Others ignore their personal weaknesses and find themselves repeating mistakes and leading unfulfilled lives. The secret to self-improvement is to discover your weaknesses and either correct them or find a way to turn them into strengths.
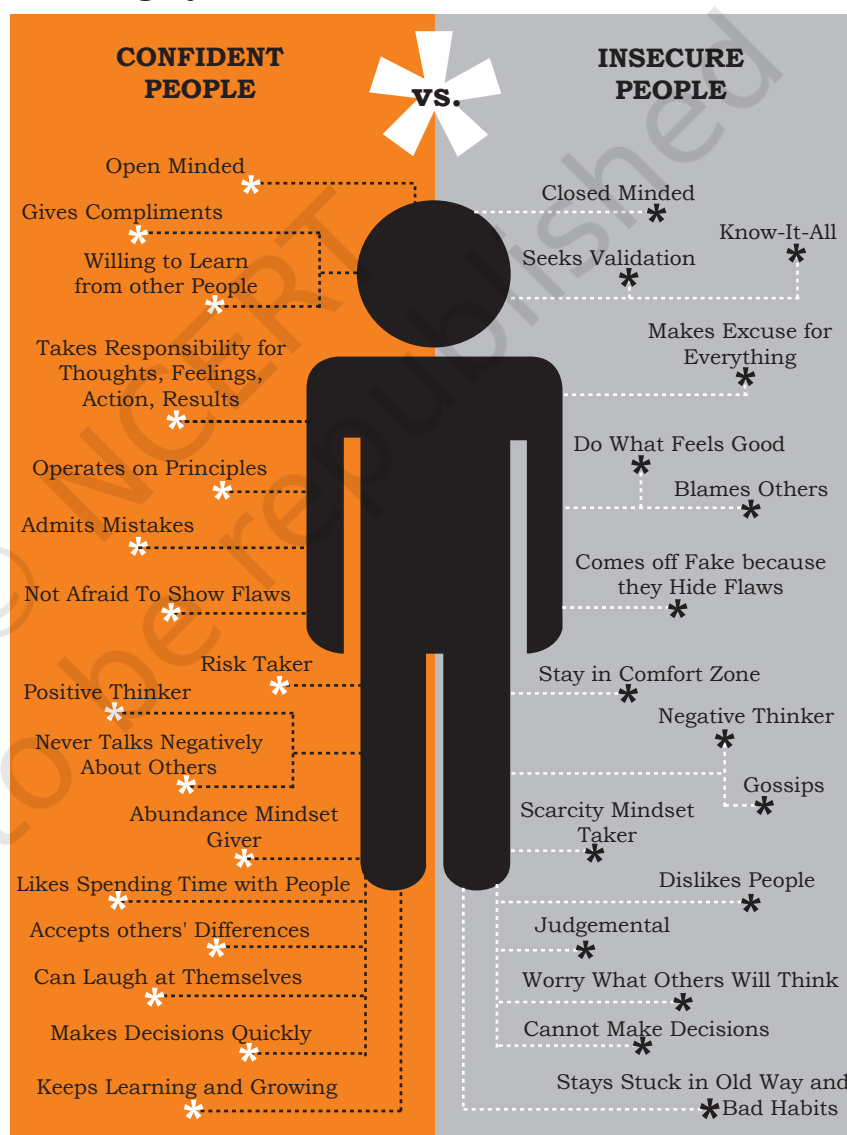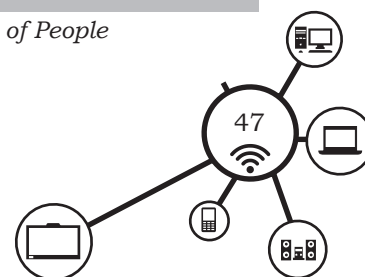

CONFIDENT PEOPLE VS. **INSECURE PEOPLE**

Confident People:
Open Minded
Gives Compliments
Willing to Learn from other People
Takes Responsibility for Thoughts, Feelings, Action, Results
Operates on Principles
Admits Mistakes
Not Afraid To Show Flaws
Risk Taker
Positive Thinker
Never Talks Negatively About Others
Abundance Mindset Giver
Likes Spending Time with People
Accepts others' Differences
Can Laugh at Themselves
Makes Decisions Quickly
Keeps Learning and Growing

Insecure People:
Closed Minded
Know-It-All
Seeks Validation
Makes Excuse for Everything
Do What Feels Good
Blames Others
Comes off Fake because they Hide Flaws
Stay in Comfort Zone
Negative Thinker
Gossips
Scarcity Mindset Taker
Dislikes People
Judgemental
Worry What Others Will Think
Cannot Make Decisions
Stays Stuck in Old Way and Bad Habits

Fig. 3.15: Strengths and Weaknesses of People

THE NEED FOR MEETING AND GREETING

Let us read this scenario to understand the need for meeting and greeting.
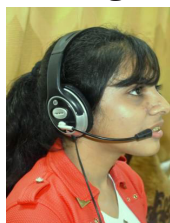
I had called up to check whether your mobile connection is working?

Firstly, you tell me who are you? And where are you calling from? How did you get my number?

From the above conversation we can see that the customer does not know who is calling and from where. The customer has also become a bit nervous and anxious as he wonders how the caller got his number. In extreme cases the customer may disconnect the call and stop answering calls from unknown numbers. This shows that the CSR is

- not serious about the work.
- not interested in finding out the customer's name and other details before calling.
- not concerned about providing a better service to the customer.

Tips

- Make a week-by-week plan to overcome your weaknesses.
- Always monitor your strengths and try to maintain them.
- If someone points out your weakness, thank them.
- Your strengths should outnumber your weaknesses.

Ways to Greet

- **Greet depending on the time of the day:** Say 'Good morning' between 8 am to 12 noon, say 'Good afternoon' between 12 noon to 4 pm, 'Good evening' while opening a call between 4 pm to 9 pm and say 'Have a good day' while closing the call any time of the day.
- **Standup when you meet someone:** This shows that you respect the person. It also helps you come to a level where you can have eye-to-eye contact.
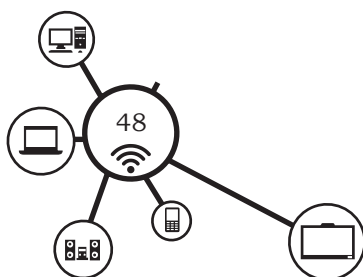
- **Introduce yourself immediately:** If someone approaches/calls you or you call/approach someone for the first time, telling your name after/before greeting. For example, "Hello my name is Devansh, pleased to meet you." (face to face) or "Hello sir, my name is Devansh and I am calling from Global7 Telecom" (over the phone).

- **Offer a handshake:** Extend your hand as you greet. The person who puts a hand out first shows confidence and friendliness.

- **Smile:** Facial expressions speak more than your words. Look as if you are pleased to meet the other person regardless of what is on your mind. Put a smile on your face for the person standing before you.

- **Greet others with their name:** Greet others using their name and make sure you continue using it. This makes the person feel important and makes them feel that you care about them personally. For example, "Hello Mr. Ghosh, is it a good time to talk?"

- **Be focussed on the customer and not on self:** If you are calling a customer, keep your focus on the customer and their needs. Keep any conversation surrounding you to a minimum and enable the customer to talk about self.

- **Do not be too casual while greeting:** Never use words like 'Hi', 'What's up', 'Guess who', while calling the customer or while addressing your superiors. This shows that you lack manners and cannot differentiate between friends and professionals.

- **Thanking:** Always thank the customer by saying, "Thank you for calling", before closing the call. Thank everyone irrespective of whether the person is a supervisor, friend or customer depending on the situation.

- **May I help you:** Asking the customer, May I help you, sends a message that you, as a CSR, care about the needs of the customer.
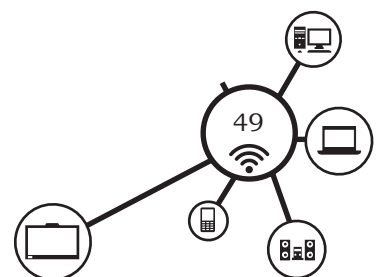
IMPORTANCE OF MEETING AND GREETING

Let us look at a scenario to know the importance of meeting and greeting.

CSR: "Hello, Mrs Desai. I wanted to inform you about our new offer."

Customer: "Who is calling? What is the name of your company and what is the offer?"

CSR: "Oh God! I forgot to tell you my name. I am Shruti calling from ABC mobile. How are you doing?"

Customer: "I am busy now."

From the above scenario it is clear that the CSR lost the customer because of

- improper greeting.
- improper introduction.
- being too informal.

Meeting and greeting a customer in an unprofessional manner creates a bad impression about you and the company in the customer's mind. It is, therefore, very important to make the customer feel good in the first few seconds of the call itself by way of correct greetings and introductions.

Tips

- Always start a conversation by greeting first and then introducing yourself.
- First see the time of the day and then greet accordingly.

NEED FOR COMPLIMENTING AND COMMENTING

Have you ever thought about the power of beautiful words people often use and how this can really help you feel good about yourself the whole day? Yes, there is nothing like a warm and a sincere compliment to make your day. Whenever you compliment someone it makes them feel important and cared for. It has the same effect on you if someone gives you a compliment. Similarly giving a positive comment to a colleague acts as a friendly advice without hurting their feelings.

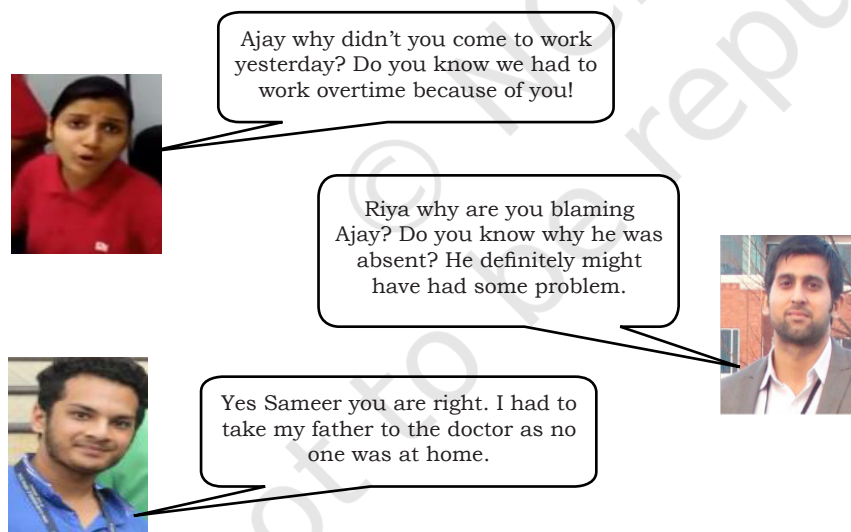Let us learn the need for complimenting and commenting through these scenario.
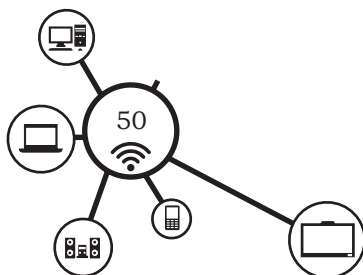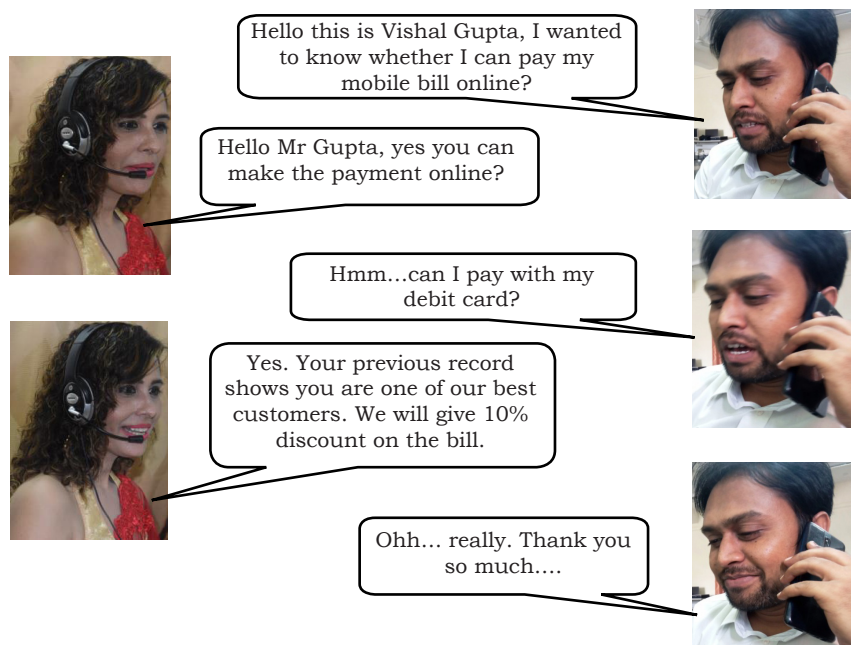
The CSR guides the customer on the phone to pay online through debit card and offers discount on online payment. This makes the customer feel good and confident.
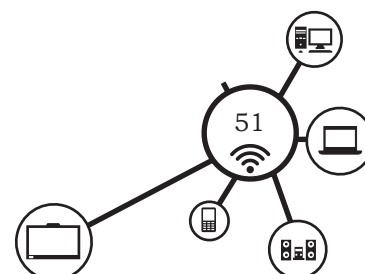
Scenario 2

In the above scenario you can see how Sameer gives a positive comment to Riya about why Ajay was absent. A comment spoken in a positive way helps in

- overcoming misunderstanding.
- showing respect for one another.

GIVING AND RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS

Everyone loves to give and receive compliments. A properly phrased compliment can make a customer, co-worker or a friend feel valued and appreciated. Letting people know that you appreciate them is a great way to make them feel good about themselves and motivate them to succeed in the future. Your compliment must be accurate and sincere to have the best effect.

Let us look at a scenario where a customer is very prompt in paying her mobile phone bills, but misses a couple of payments. So the CSR calls up to check the reason. Although she is a valuable customer her connection will be discontinued if she doesn't make the payment within 40 days.

## Scenario 1: Complimenting a customer

Hello Ma'am, Good afternoon. This is Shruti and I am calling on behalf of E-Tech Telecom.
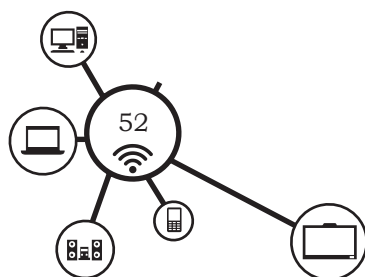
Yes, tell me.

Ma'am, I can see that you have been paying your mobile bills on time. But you haven't paid your bills since the last two months. I am very sorry to inform you that if the payment is not made within 40 days your connection will be discontinued.
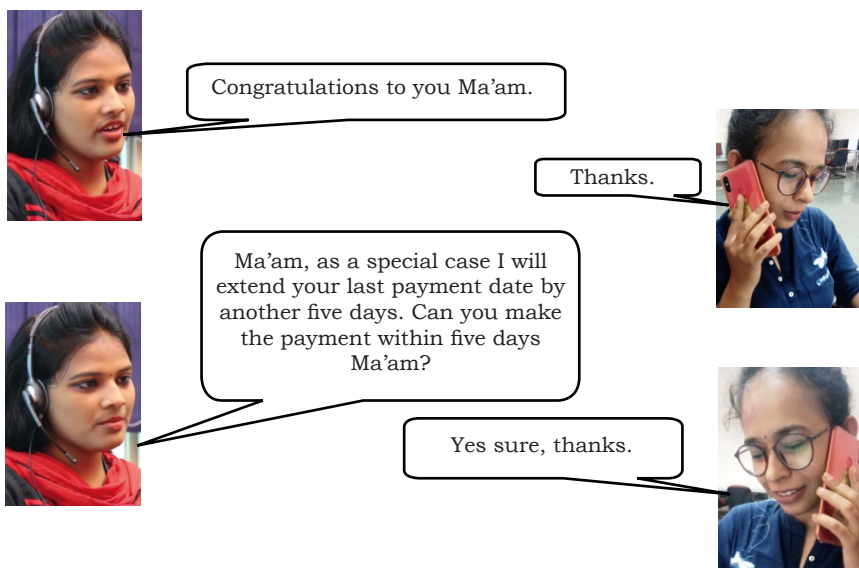
The CSR calls up after 40 days
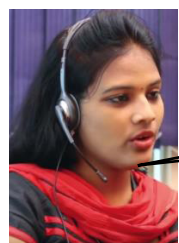
Good morning, Ma'am. This is Shruti from E-Tech Telecom, I spoke to you sometime back about your pending mobile bill payment?

Oh yes! I am so sorry I couldn't make the payment as I got married recently and have been keeping busy.

Congratulations to you Ma'am.

Thanks.

Ma'am, as a special case I will extend your last payment date by another five days. Can you make the payment within five days Ma'am?

Yes sure, thanks.

From the above scenario you can see how the CSR complimented the customer. This shows that the CSR is sharing the joy of the customer and wants to make the customer feel special. The CSR informs the customer that her case will be treated as a special one and gives her extra time to make the payment.

The CSR closes the call by complimenting the customer once again.

Scenario 2: Complimenting female colleagues

Be formal. "You are looking good today", "You are looking nice", "You look beautiful" are fine as long as you say it formally and confidently. Be sure to keep your tone right and maintain eye contact with the lady. Ask for permission if you have to suggest something personal.

Importance of Complimenting and Commenting

Giving compliments is critical in building relationships and encouraging other people. Compliments are an expression of praise, respect or appreciation. A compliment can be as simple as "You are the best", "I wouldn't have completed this project without your help", "You are my true friend" and so on. It is said that compliments increase a person's self-esteem and makes one happy.

When to compliment the customer?

- If a customer is a patron.
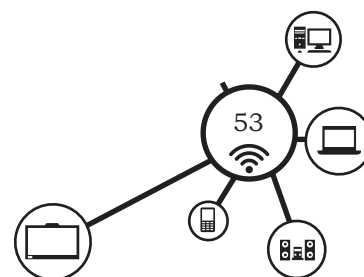
- For good past payment record.
- If a customer shares a good news with you.
- If a customer is polite and good to you.

Tips

- Compliment people sincerely. Do not fake the comment.
- Be specific in your compliments by pointing out specific qualities that you appreciate. For instance, instead of saying "I like your work," try saying, "You manage your time so well and complete your work before time."
- Choose your words carefully while complimenting or commenting. Do not use words like cool, mind-blowing, superb, etc.
- A compliment that works in one situation might not work in another. For example, you could compliment a colleague on her dressing at a company picnic, but not at a meeting of senior managers in front of everyone.
- Respond positively when you receive a compliment. For example, if a person pays you a compliment about your work, do not start complaining about the odd working hours, people's attitude at work, etc.
- While complimenting your immediate boss, be formal yet warm and genuine. Do not come across as someone who is trying to flatter.

CALL FLOW (ROUTING)

When customers dial a Call Centre, their calls are transferred to the Interactive Voice Response or the IVR System. The IVR is an automated system that allows a computer to interact with human callers. It uses voice and dual-tone multi-frequency signaling (DTMF) keypad inputs to do so. When a customer dials the number of their choice, the IVR responds with pre-recorded instructions, until it reaches a CSR. If a CSR is available, the call is immediately transferred to them. This is what we call the **Call Flow or Call Routing**

INFORMATION SECURITY

It is important that as a CRM, you take all measures for information security. Information security is the practice of protecting information from unauthorised access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, inspection,
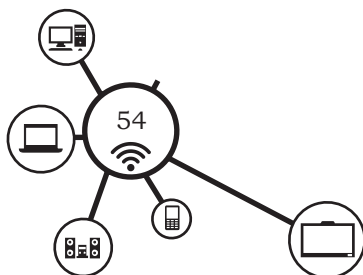
recording or destruction. This data could be in an electronic or physical form.

Some rules to bear in mind while handling sensitive data are

- do not reveal a customer's personal and financial information to anyone other than the account holder.

- unauthorised information, written or verbal, cannot be divulged to any customer/competitor/any other person for example photocopy of customer information sheet, etc.
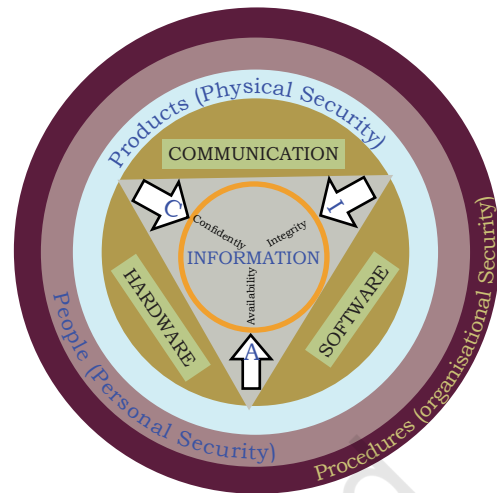
- do not share one customer's information with another customer.

Fig. 3.16: Information Security Parameters

Client Confidentiality

The client places a lot of trust in the organisation and the CRM before sharing their personal information. It is crucial for the CRM to maintain that trust and faith by maintaining absolute confidentiality of the client's information. It is a criminal offence to share this data with any unauthorised person. A culprit can be convicted and imprisoned, if found guilty of this charge.

Data Security

Some ways in which data can be protected are

- data received from the client during processing, in any form, such as hard copies or softcopies, should be destroyed or returned after the completion of work.

- none of the employees are allowed to bring any storage devices like memory cards, CD/DVD/ blue ray disc, external hard disk, floppy disk, pen drive, etc., to work.

Fig. 3.17: Data Security

- at entry and exit points, the security guards frisk the employee to check that none of the storage devices are carried in or out.

- CDs, DVDs, pen drives, disk drives or any other storage devices are not allowed in the individual PCs and in the office premises without prior
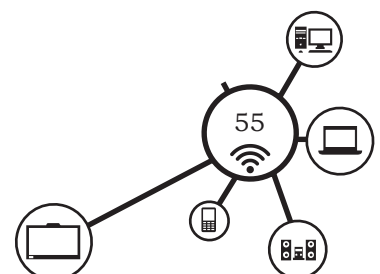
permission from authorised management and team leaders.

- the professional firewall system restricts the users to surf or access unauthorised sites on the Internet.
- Firewall restricts the rights of all the users within the company. A written Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is obtained at the time of joining from each employee.
- entry into the operations area is restricted by fingerprint software as per the privacy norms and requirements.
- the server for the website is protected too and it is crucial for the CRM to ensure that they do not use, access or try to dig unauthorised information.
- limited access to the network is given through login IDs and password protection.
- passwords and access controls are well-defined for authorised internal persons.

CALL CENTRE MEASURES

Given below is a list of frequently used terms that are crucial for a CRM.

- **Adherence to schedule:** It is a general term that refers to how well a CRM adheres to their schedule. It includes

  (a) time spent on taking calls during a shift. This includes the time spent in handling calls and in waiting for calls to arrive.

  (b) the amount of time a CRM was available to take calls.

  Example: 'I had a good day today. I was able to adhere to the schedule well.'

- **Agent:** He or she is a person who handles incoming or outgoing calls. Also called CRM, Telephone Sale/Service Representative (TSR), Representative, Associate, Consultant, Engineer, Operator, Technician, Account Executive, Team Member, Customer Service Professional, Staff Member, Attendant, Specialist, etc.

Fig. 3.18: CSR with Customer

CRM DOMESTIC VOICE – CLASS XI
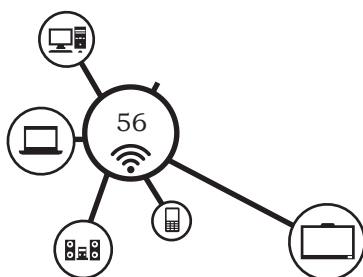
Example: 'This is the accounts section, Sir. I will connect you to a customer service agent.'

- **Automated Attendant:** At the beginning of the call to a BPO, you hear prompts, such as press one for sales, two for support and so on. The system prompts callers to respond to choices and then coordinates to send callers to specific destinations. This voice processing capability that automates the attendant function is known as an automated attendant.

  Example: 'The automated attendant is being updated to include the new promotion and it will be ready by tomorrow.'

- **Turnaround Time (TAT):** It is the time elapsed between complaint registered and resolved.

 *Example:* 'The TAT for Ms Sharma's complaint was quite short.

- **Service Level Agreement (SLA):** It is a contract between the main company and the Call Centre. It specifies, usually in measurable terms, what services the Call Centre will provide. There is always a written service level agreement so that services for the customers can be measured and justified.

  Example: A Call Centre, Soft Call, could have the process of Hewlett Packard. HP is the main company and Soft Call is the Call Centre. Then, HP will specify the terms of the SLA.

Some metrics that the SLA may specify include

- What percentage of time the services will be available. For example, six days a week, 18 hours a day, etc.
- The number of users that can be served simultaneously. For example, 350 CRMs can speak with 350 customers at a time.
- Specific performance benchmarks to which actual performance will be periodically compared. For example, seven laptops a month.
- Help desk response time for various types of problems.
- Dial-in access availability.
- Usage statistics provided.
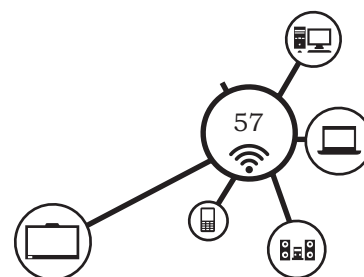
First Call Resolution (FCR) is a resolution offered in the first call. The best way to increase customer satisfaction and in turn increase profit is to resolve the cursory or complaint in the first call. The customer should not have to call the Call Centre again for the same reason.
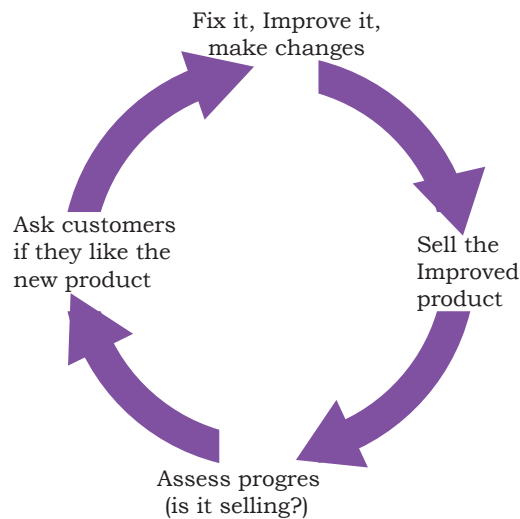
Advantages of FCR
- Impacts customer satisfaction
- Helps to avoid repeat calls
- Helps in avoiding escalation

A first level executive must listen attentively to the customer and try to offer the best resolution possible.

Example: 'I was able to provide many FCRs today.'

After-Call Work (ACW) is also called Wrap-up and Post-Call Processing (PCP). It is the work that a CRM must do immediately after an inbound transaction. It often includes entering data, filling out forms and making outbound calls necessary to complete the transaction. While the CRM is doing ACW, they are unavailable to receive another inbound call. ACW is a process of the call but the customer is not online. ACW for a month = Total time spent on ACW/Total number of calls taken.

Example: 'I have to do my ACW properly.'

Fig. 3.19: First Call Resolution

The figure shows a circular cycle with the following labels:
- Fix it, Improve it, make changes
- Sell the Improved product
- Assess progres (is it selling?)
- Ask customers if they like the new product

Support Queue	Sales Queue	Duration
Pause ACW	Pause unavailable by ACW	20 sec
Pause unavailable by ACW	Pause ACW	20 sec

Fig. 3.20: After-Call Work

Actual Call Handling Time (ACHT) is the actual time spent on a call. It is important to the company for strictly financial reasons. Higher ACHT impacts
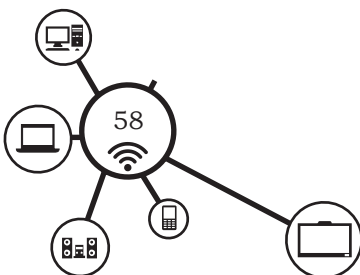
business profitability. Hence, it is important to address customer queries in a timely manner. Average of ACHT = Total ACHT of the month/ Total number of calls taken.
Example: 'My team's ACHT today has been very low.'

Average Handling Time (AHT) is the total time taken by CRMs to complete a call. This includes the time taken by a CRM to make a call, disconnect and wrap it up with documentation. It is the sum of the AHT and average ACW for a specified time period.
Example: 'What was the group's AHT today?'

AHT = ACHT+ ACW

Average Hold Time (AHT) indicates the duration for which a CRM has placed the customer on hold.

Stay updated is all about how to make the customer feel happy. Knowledge is not the most important thing anymore for the agent. If you cannot help the customer, the agent can explain why, so that the customer understands. The best method to show the agents this is by getting them to listen to their own conversation along with a coach and just focus on what they could do extra for the customer.

Take ownership and try your best to solve the problem. Look into the issue to find the cause of the problem.

Self-evaluate as this helps to understand not only where you are going wrong but also what you are doing well. Share best practices with colleagues.

Anticipate questions and provide the information before a customer can ask.

Avoid 'over service' strictly answer the main question. Resolve questions from a customer's perspective. Ask the customer what solution they want and listen to them carefully without any restrictions.

Don't interrupt the caller, instead listen to the caller. Allow the caller to say what they need without interruption, then recap and check understanding, addressing one query at a time. This is especially important if the customer is agitated or unhappy with the previous service interaction.

Avoid 'cold transfers' to other departments, or at least send the call through the client data to avoid repeating the same questions all over again.
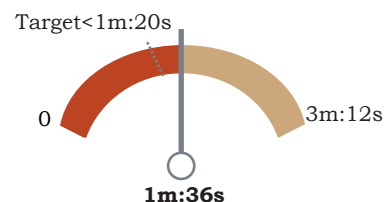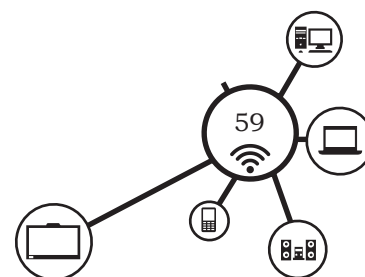

Fig. 3.21: Actual Call Handling Time

Follow workflows through the call when dealing with various call types. This helps reduce the AHT and also reduces repeat calls and increases first-time resolution.

Organise the knowledge-base alphabetically, like emails and notes to make things easy to find.

Cut down on the aggressive attitude and stay positive, smile while talking and cut down the aggressive attitude if it is an objection-handling call.

External Customers

An external customer uses your company's products or services but is not part of your organisation. For example, if you own a retail store, an external customer is an individual who enters your store and buys merchandise.

External customers are essential to the success of any business, as they provide the revenue stream through their purchases that the enterprise needs to survive. Satisfied external customers often make repeat purchases as well as refer your business to other people they know. A customer who suffers a negative experience in business, such as being treated rudely by an employee, can also hinder a business by dissuading others from patronising it.

Let us now understand our customers a little better.

Yes, This is me! Is this Sunday Bank? Perfect name for you....You guys never pick up the phone! ...I want a tax-saving investment ...but hey...don't try to sell me risky junk where only YOU get your commission!
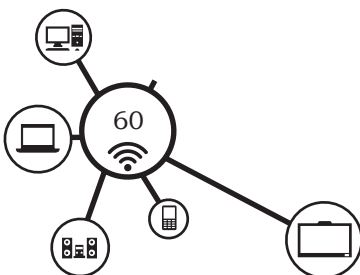
Hello, do you have Fit-Fast? Ok, tell me... If I buy your Tummy Buster then will you guarantee that my tummy will become flat in two weeks?

All customers who call for a service or help are external customers. They are not part of your Call Centre. They are external to the system and hence the name.

The well off, the not so very well off, males, females,

young, elderly, soft spoken, irate, confused—any of these could become your external customer if they have called you at your Call Centre! As a CSR, it is your duty to service them equally.

INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

They are within your system. For example, your Team Leaders are your internal customers because they give you the orders that you must execute. Besides, your peers too could become your internal customers, when they seek your help!

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Fig. 3.22: Internal and External customer

Customer expectations are beliefs about a product or service. For instance, when customers buy a product or service they already have a specific set of expectations. These expectations are based on their perceptions about the product or service, the company and the industry. These expectations are formed through past experience and the experience of others with whom the customer interacts. So, knowing customer expectations is the first and possibly the most critical step in delivering good quality service. Being incorrect about what customers expect can mean losing a customer.

Fig. 3.23: Customer Expectation

In simple words customer expectations are the customer's wants and needs. This is usually expressed in terms of value of product and its features including customer service and after sales service. As a CSR, you must meet or exceed customer expectations to achieve customer satisfaction. When you buy an mp3 player, you expect it to play mp3 music. Similarly, if you buy an insurance policy, your expectation from the policy is protection for you and your family from unforeseen circumstances. In simple words, every customer buys a product or service as they have some expectations from it.
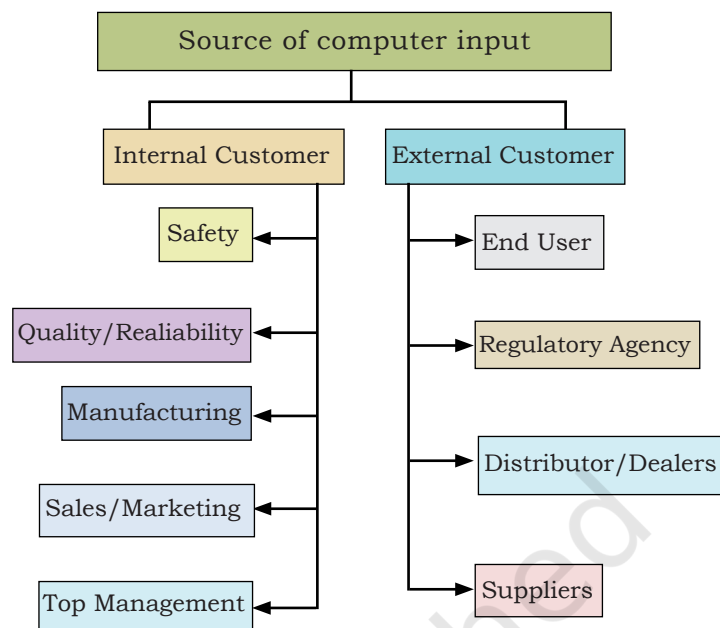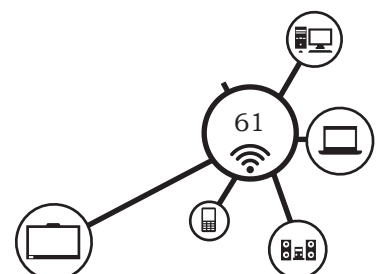
OUTBOUND CALLS: INTERACTING WITH CUSTOMER

As a CSR you must be smart enough to identify what a customer expects. Read through the scenario to understand better.

Scenario 1

Hello, I had bought a purifier from your company just two months ago. The purifier's display is not working and it takes a long time to purify the water.

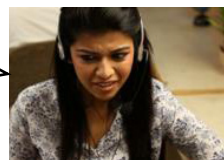Have you read the owner's manual before operating the purifier?
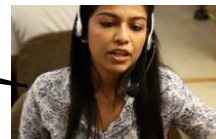
Of course, I am using the purifier since the last one-and-a-half months to purify the water.
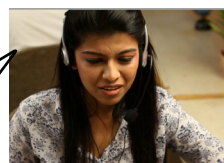
What is the model number of your purifier?

It is WT9H20.

As this is an old model the spares are not available. You have to wait till the new parts arrive.

But I bought it just two months back!

That does not mean it was manufactured two months back. It must have been in the showroom for more than a year!
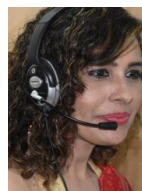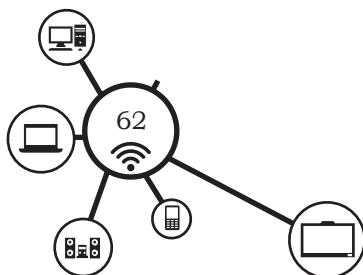
The customer feels cheated and cuts the phone line.
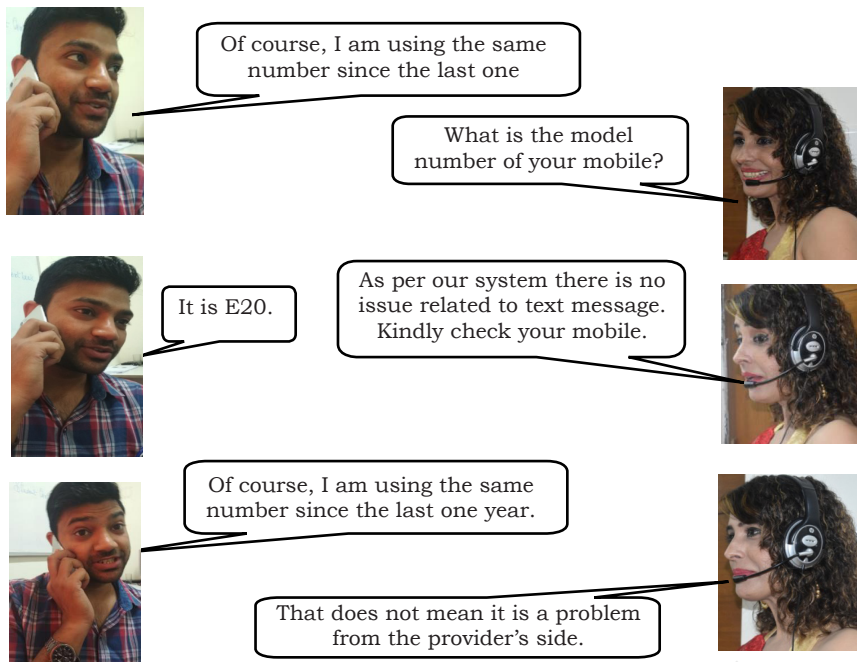
Scenario 2

Hello, actually I am calling regarding a text message related issue.

Are you facing the problem on the same number?

Of course, I am using the same number since the last one

What is the model number of your mobile?

It is E20.

As per our system there is no issue related to text message. Kindly check your mobile.

Of course, I am using the same number since the last one year.

That does not mean it is a problem from the provider's side.

From the two scenarios you can see that a customer expects

- true and accurate information about the products that they buy.
- the product to perform the way it is supposed to within its warranty period.
- good after sales service that alleviates their trust in the company.
- the CSR to provide solutions for their problems rather than complicating them.
- to be treated fairly and given genuine reasons for any inconvenience caused to them.
- the company to cooperate with them to understand their problems.
- timely service.
- quality products.
- the CSR to have a helpful attitude.

Meet the Customer's Expectations

When customers get what they expect, they're satisfied. The quality of your customer service is almost wholly determined by your ability to meet your customer's expectations. Let us see some techniques to meet the customer's expectations effectively.
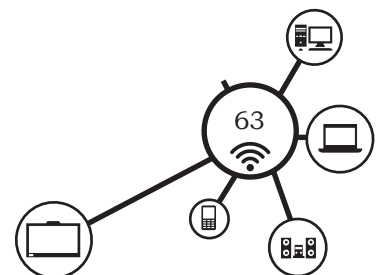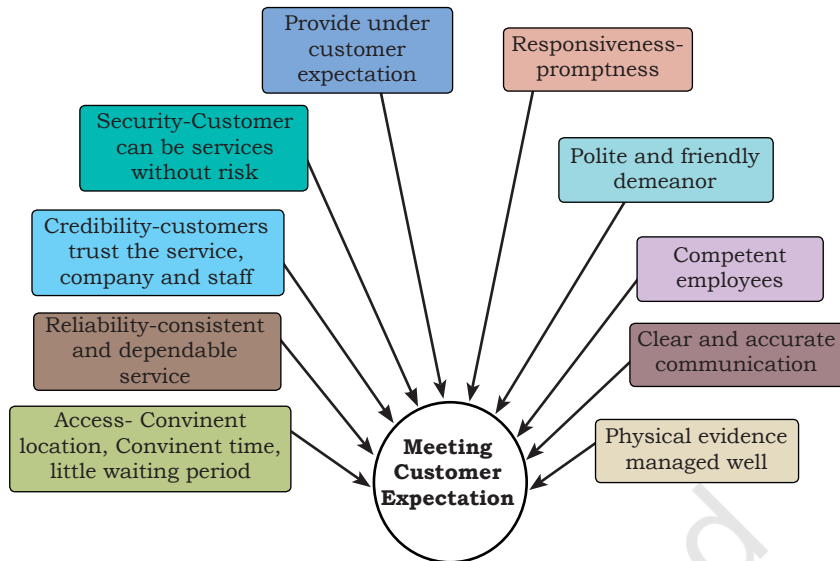
Fig. 3.24: Meet the Customer Expectations

- **Promptness:** We live in an era of impatience. Customers do not want to wait for service. Even a short wait will discourage customers in most situations.

- **Professionalism:** Customers want a CSR who is knowledgeable about products and services, skilled at dealing with people and responsible in performing duties. Customers want to deal with a professional CSR.

- **Accuracy:** Customers expect the CSR to get information and take orders correctly, the very first time. They do not want to deal with mistakes or correct the CSR's errors.

- **Friendliness:** Customers expect to be treated respectfully and politely. Customers want to be liked and treated in a friendly manner.

- **Honesty:** Customers want honest, straight forward information and responses. Most customers appreciate a CSR that will admit mistakes and work to correct them. A customer that believes he or she has been misled will stop doing business with the company and register a complaint.

  Honesty also includes follow-up on promises. Broken promises anger customers. Customers expect to be informed if a promise cannot be fulfilled as stated.

- **Empathy:** Customers expect understanding. They want a CSR who is willing to see their side
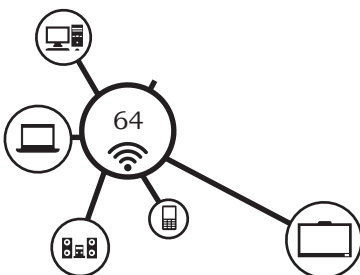
of a situation, especially when there is a problem. They want a CSR who will listen to them.

In short customers expect fast, friendly, and accurate service to be provided.

Tips

- Ask questions to measure the customer's expectations.
- Give clear and complete information about the product or service.
- If asked, inform the customer about the limitations of the product.
- Answer all the queries of the customer.
- If possible, try to address all the expectations of the customer.

Customer Service

Hello, is this Fast Bookings Pvt. Ltd.?

Yes. Thank you for calling Sir. May I know your name, e-mail ID and the class by which you would like to travel?

Yes, my name is Ankit... and I would like to travel business class. Oh and I forgot to tell, I want to reach Delhi at 11.am. So book the ticket accordingly.

Sure sir, I will book the ticket as per your requirement. How would you like to make the payment, Sir?
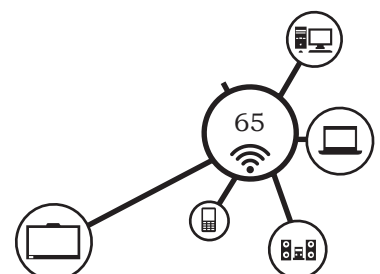
I would like to pay through my credit card.

Credit card is fine sir. You will get your e-ticket in a few minutes from now. Have a nice day sir...

What did you observe in this scenario?
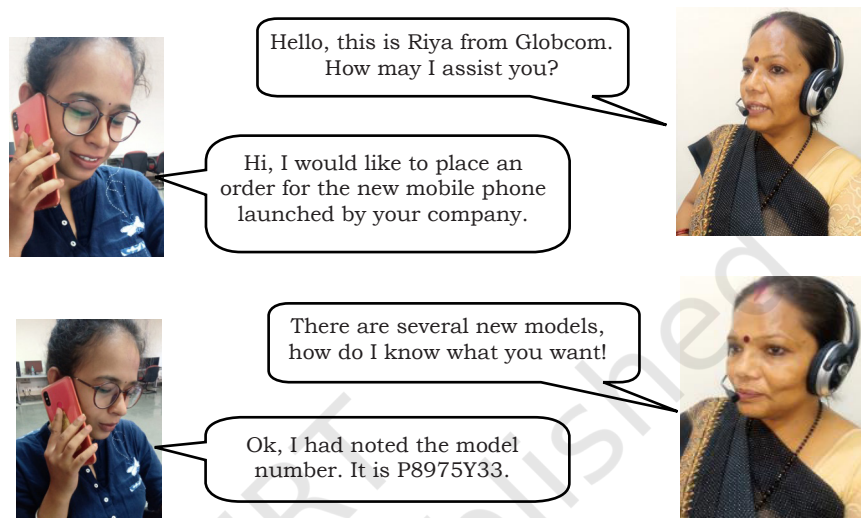The CSR
- greeted the customer,
- noted down the details,

- gave prompt response, and
- provided quick service.

Service is an act of assistance provided to others. In this case, it means the interaction with the customer. How efficiently you provide the service to the customer, will decide how good your services are.

Hello, this is Riya from Globcom. How may I assist you?

Hi, I would like to place an order for the new mobile phone launched by your company.

There are several new models, how do I know what you want!

Ok, I had noted the model number. It is P8975Y33.

Customer disconnects the call....
What did you notice in the call?
The CSR

- used inappropriate tone,
- was not willing to help,
- argued with the customer and
- showed bad attitude.

Great customer service is very important for the company as well as the CSR.

- A satisfied customer will become a repeat customer.
- One satisfied customer will bring in 10 other customers.
- The company's reputation will grow and so will yours.
- Great customer service indirectly reflects your good work.
- You will gain appreciation from both the customers as well as your seniors.
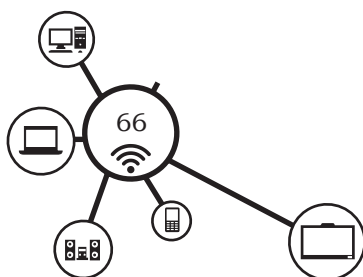
PROVIDE GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

You have to succeed in your job. You have to know how to give great customer service. Here is how:

- Answer the call and do not keep the customer waiting.
- Do not make false promises to the customer, unless you can keep them.
- Take that extra step to help the customer.
- Do not confuse the customer with technical jargons.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the customer to understand the situation.

General Courtesies

We are going to see some general instances of courteous, that is polite behaviour.

Scenario 1
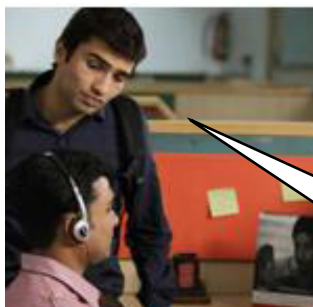
Scenario 2
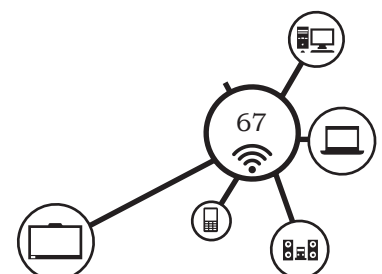
We just saw some instances of kind people. What they had in common, was courtesy and consideration for others. We are a part of the service industry and courtesy in our speech is the most important part of our role.

Courtesies while Opening a Call

How you handle a call makes all the difference. A warm, helpful, professional and friendly voice on the phone will help build the customer base. Here are a few scenarios that will give you an idea on how to follow courtesies while opening a call.

Scenario 1

The customer gets angry and she hangs up the phone because the CSR was being too casual and familiar. She began talking about the service without the customer's permission.

Now let us look at how Shruti handles the same call.

Scenario 2

Good morning Ma'am, and how are you today? Is this a good time to talk?

I am fine... who is this?

This is Shruti from Take a Trip. If you have just five minutes I could tell you about a lovely summer package that is easy on your pocket too!

Hmmm sure... what options do you have?

We will now look at each point of courtesy that won Shruti a customer today.

"*Good morning Ma'am. How are you today?*"

Wishing the customer and showing genuine interest in her.

"*Is this a good time to talk?*"

Being considerate of the customer's convenience.

"*If you have just five minutes...*"

Double-checking so that the customer does not feel rushed.

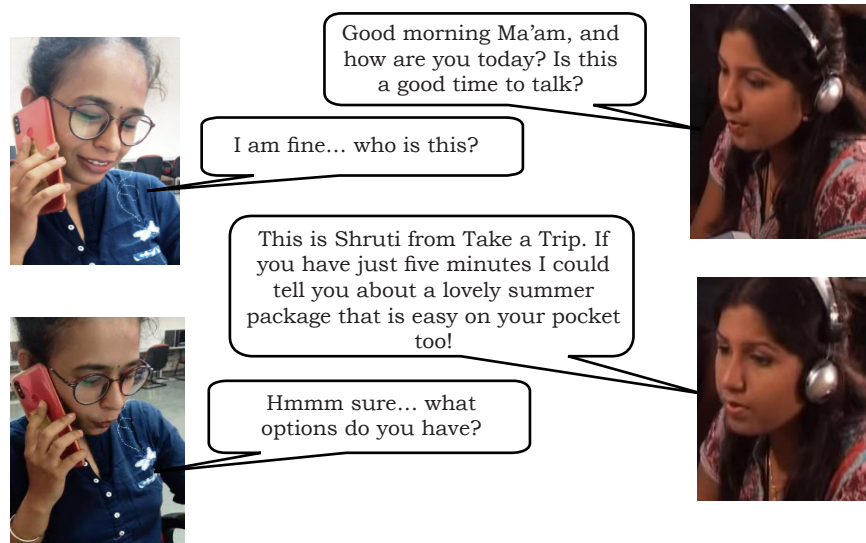These are some courtesies that you may observe while opening a call with your customer.

Courtesies during a Call

We have seen some courtesies that you need to follow while opening a call. These courtesies must continue throughout the conversation. Here are two instances that will help you understand this well.

Scenario 1

I just called to tell you that your dues on your mobile bills for the last two months are pending Sir.
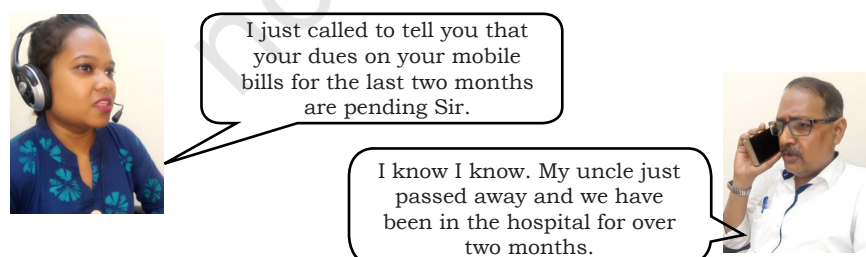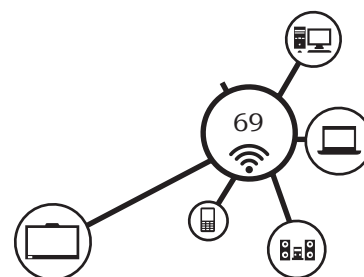
I know I know. My uncle just passed away and we have been in the hospital for over two months.
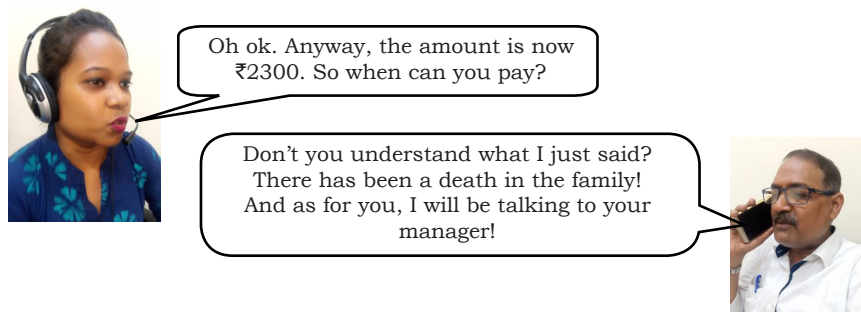
The situation above was a sensitive one. The customer got angry with the CSR because she did not show any consideration for the customer's situation.

Let us see how Riya, another CSR, handles the same call.

Scenario 2
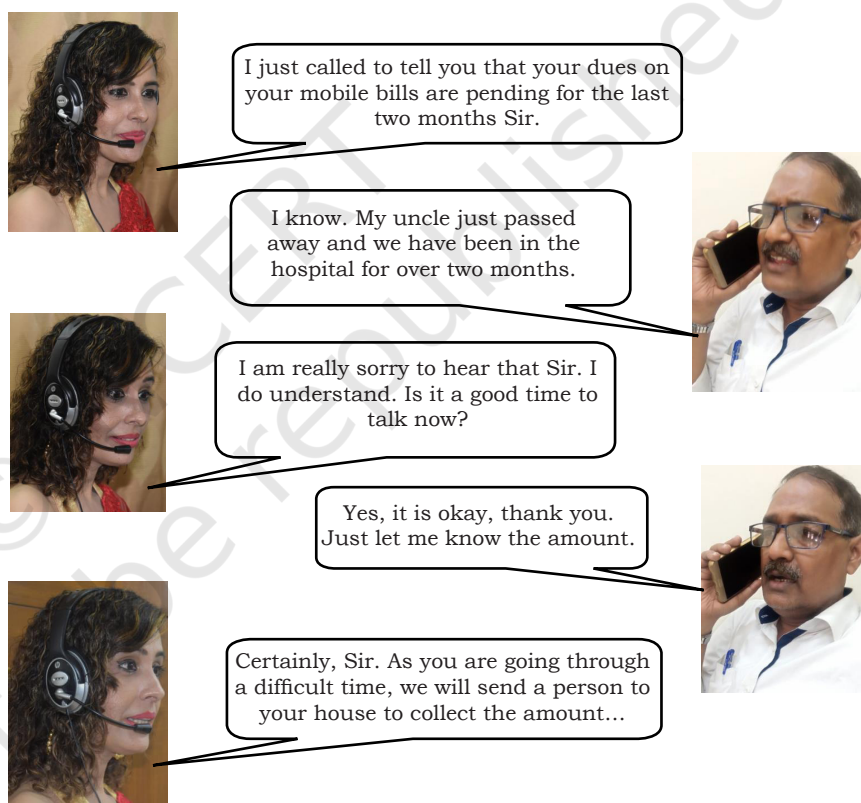
We will now look at each point of courtesy that won Riya a customer today.

"*I am really sorry to hear that, Sir. I do understand. Is it a good time to talk now?*"

Riya expresses genuine sympathy. Double-checks if it is a good time to talk.

"*Certainly, Sir. … As you are in a difficult time, we will send a person to your house to collect the amount.*"

Riya speaks in a helpful tone. She also offers additional help to show consideration.

Those were some tips on courtesies you may observe during a call.

TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Take the call as soon as you hear the beep. Do not keep the caller waiting. If the customer disconnects before you take the call, then it will become an abandoned call.

Open the call by greeting the customer. Identify yourself – your name, the name of your company and the relevant department you are from.

For example,

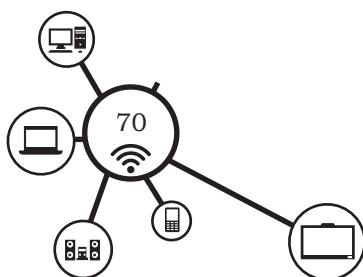"*Good morning, thank you for calling Do-well Publications. This is Sanaya from Customer Service. How may I help you?*"

Behaviour while on a Call

Open the call by greeting the customer. Identify yourself – your name, the name of your company and the relevant department you are from.

For example,

"*Yes Sir. I have just checked. We can dispatch all the copies that you need. It will take three to five working days. Is that ok with you, Sir?*"

Always take permission from the customer before putting him or her on hold.

For example,

"*About the discounts… well, Sir I need to check with my Supervisor. May I put you on hold for a minute while I check? Thank you, Sir.*"
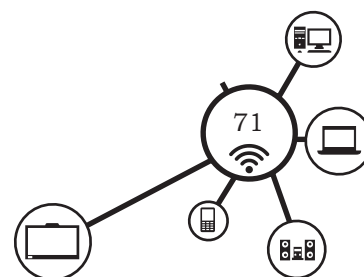
If you need to put the customer on hold for longer, come back on line to inform him or her about it. Never leave dead air.

For example,

"*Sir, I am sorry to keep you waiting. My Superior is checking, he's likely to take another minute. I request you to stay online. Thank you, Sir.*"

If you must sneeze, cough or do something that you would NOT want your customer to hear, use the MUTE button to do so.

Before closing the call, thank the customer. Let the caller hang up first.

For example,

"*Sure Sir, anytime! Thank you for calling customer service. Have a nice day Sir.*"

Don'ts of Telephone Etiquette

Read carefully what you must NOT do while taking inbound or making outbound calls.

- Do not leave the phone unanswered. There is a danger of losing the call.
- Do not eat, drink or chew when on a call.
- Do not shout or laugh loudly when talking to the customer over the phone.
- Do not hurry the customer into finishing the call.
- Do not breathe heavily over the mouthpiece as the microphone picks up even the slightest of sounds and your heavy breathing will be heard by the customer.
- Do not use technical jargons or slangs.
- Do not argue with the customer even if they are wrong. Put your point across using the correct tone and language.
- Do not ever lose your temper, how so ever difficult, the situation may get.
- Do not give false information to the customer.
- Do not discuss personal matters on a call.

Dos of Telephone Etiquette

You should strictly follow these dos while on call with the customer.

- Always ask the customer, before putting them on hold.
- Use the mute button if you must cough or sneeze.
- Listen carefully to what the customer is saying. Do not interrupt.
- Speak clearly and slowly without rushing.
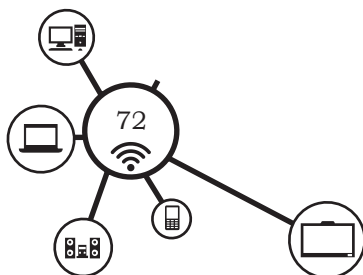
- Be patient.
- Be polite.
- Do not be forceful or aggressive while making outbound calls.

The First Call

Mrs Sharma: *That's not a bad idea, I do need one right now. Can you call me in the evening at 6 o'clock please?*

Shruti: *Sure Ma'am, I will call you exactly at 6 o'clock in the evening. Thank you for your time and please look forward to a wonderful offer today!*

Shruti made some critical correct moves that made her customer interested in what she had to say. So let us look at the techniques used by Shruti.

1. "*Good morning, Mrs Sharma*" Greet the customer. Whenever possible, begin by taking the customer's name, it makes the customer feel special.

2. "*Is this a good time to talk?*" The customer may be busy with something. So always ask for permission to speak.

3. "*I just want to congratulate you as you have won a great offer... a huge 25% discount.*"

Generate interest in the customer for your product. See if you can begin by congratulating the customer or say something that will arouse their curiosity.

4. Leave the customer with something to think about.

If you have mentioned a discount, then the customer should think about it.

5. "*Thank you for your time and look forward to a wonderful offer today*".

Thank the customer, whatever the outcome of the call.
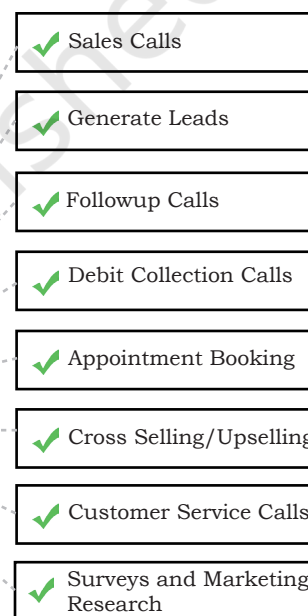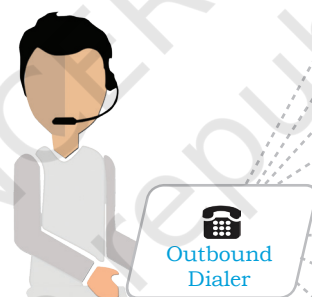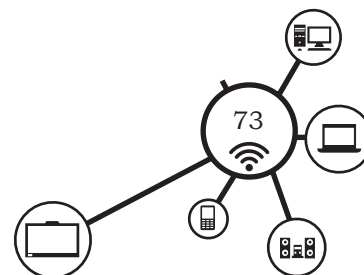
✔ Sales Calls

✔ Generate Leads

✔ Followup Calls

✔ Debit Collection Calls

✔ Appointment Booking

✔ Cross Selling/Upselling

✔ Customer Service Calls

✔ Surveys and Marketing Research

Outbound Dialer

Fig. 3.25 Types of call

QUALITIES TO BE DEVELOPED TO MAKE A TELE-SALE CALL

- Ability to cut ice
- Politeness

So with your first call, you must develop the skill to cut ice with the customer and be polite at all times.

> **Tip**
> - Always try to sound warm and friendly, positive, professional, helpful polite and courteous.

The Follow-up Call

Out of sight is out of mind! So it is important to follow-up with your customer. Keep reminding the customer about your offer or product or service.

Let us see how Shruti follows up on her call

Shruti: *"Good evening, Ma'am. This is Shruti again from STAR Electro. I hope you are free to talk now?"*

Mrs Sharma: *"Hi Shruti, tell me. What is the offer?"*

Shruti: *Ma'am, our company is celebrating its 25th anniversary by giving our special customers some great offers on washing machines. If you can come to our showroom, we can show you the models on which offers are available."*

Mrs Sharma: *"I am not sure if I should get a new machine now. I already have a semi-automatic one."*

Shruti: *"If I may say so, getting an automatic one will make your life much easier. You must be so busy with office and house work and this is a once in a lifetime anniversary offer, Ma'am."*

Mrs Sharma: *"Okay, I think I will drop in and take a look."*

Shruti: *"That's great, Ma'am. I will tell he sales staff to expect you. You know our address, don't you? It is 115 Kolar Road. You could also call for more enquiries*
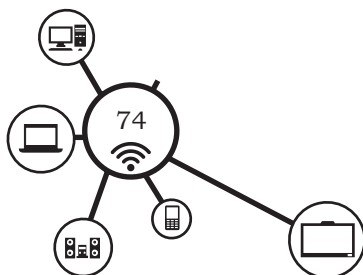
at 1800044334466. Should I repeat that... okay great. We hope to show you some great washing machine models tomorrow. Thank you so much, Ma'am."

Shruti called her customer for the second time

- To tell her about the discount offer.
- To convey to her the benefits of the product.
- To invite her to the showroom.
- To persuade her to avail the offer.

1. Influence the customer to walk into a showroom, if possible. It is halfway to making a sale.

"*If you can come to our showroom any time.*"

2. Make a suggestion to the customer. Match your product to the customer's lifestyle – the greatest sales trick.

"*If I may say so, getting an automatic one will make your life much easier. You must be so busy.*"

3. Work out the sales proposition according to the situation, that is, the reason WHY the customer should buy your product. In other words, answer the question that is in the customer's mind – "What's in it for me?"

4. Let the customer feel that the offer is a limited and special one.

"This is a once in a lifetime anniversary offer, Ma'am."
In short, Shruti showed all the qualities that go to make an excellent telesales caller:

- Great salesmanship
- Persuasion
- Politeness at all times.

After generating a sales lead, you must effectively follow up on it. While this may seem straightforward, there are many variables involved in the process that will determine whether a sales lead converts or slips through your fingers. By implementing five of the correct follow-up techniques, you should maximise your conversion rate and increase your overall sales volume.
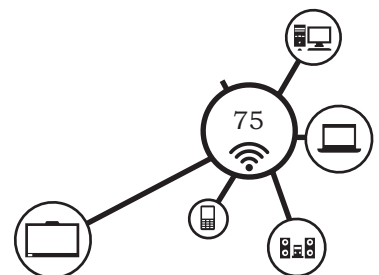
Follow up on Every Lead

You never really know the potential of a lead unless you take the proper steps to follow up. In some cases, a weak-looking lead could result in big sales, while a strong one could result in nothing. That's why you should treat every lead as if it could bring in sales and even become a long-term customer. Following up on leads is usually a numbers game. The more effort you put in the higher your sales figures.

Have a Specific Game Plan

Nurturing each lead to the fullest and properly executing your follow-ups is important. Your exact game plan will depend upon several factors, like how many leads you have on an average, your number of employees, etc. If your business sells different types of products, you might want to dedicate sales representatives to follow up on leads that fall into specific product categories. Each representative should be fully familiarised with the products within his assigned category and capable of answering nearly any question. You would then want to follow suit with other employees to adequately cover all leads. When dealing with numerous leads on a consistent basis, you may even want to have an employee who is solely responsible for re-contacting leads who showed interest, but were not ready to make a purchase right away.

Have a Sense of Urgency

Another part of maximising your conversion rate involves responding to each sales lead as quickly as possible. According to the Harvard Business Review, businesses that respond to inquiries within an hour are seven times more likely to qualify a lead than businesses that wait longer than an hour. After 24 hours have passed, the likelihood of making a conversion drops drastically.

Establish Rapport and Trust

After making contact, it should be your prerogative to win over each lead. Because many will be initially skeptical, you need to be equipped to gain their trust.
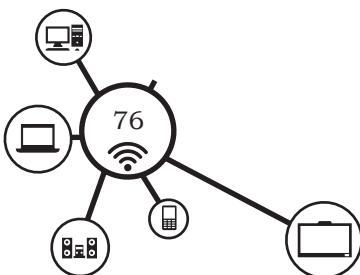
This can usually be done in a few ways. First, you need to have a deep knowledge of your products and/or services and be able to answer questions. This conveys a sense of professionalism and serves as a positive reflection of your business. Next, you should be as courteous and friendly as possible. Nothing will turn off a lead quicker than being impolite or disrespectful. Finally, you should take each lead's specific needs into consideration. If someone has unique circumstances, you should be willing to work to accommodate them.

Keep your Promises

Hold up to your end of the bargain when following up on leads. If you said that you would e-mail someone a free trial download or informational pamphlet, do it promptly. Not keeping your promises can be extremely detrimental to your entire campaign and give your business a bad name. It's ideal to 'under promise and over deliver'. This means that you should strive to exceed your lead's expectations.

Getting the most from your leads requires consistent professionalism. Taking the time to reach out to every lead is a great way to start. Having an efficient system in place for handling each lead should streamline the process while maximising conversions. Responding quickly can help you capitalise on hot leads. Also, connecting with each sales lead on a personal level and delivering on promises can help position your business for success.

Challenges during a Telesales Call

Teleselling is not as easy as it seems. A telesales caller has to be tough and sensitive at the same time! Take a look at these snippets of various customers.

- **Irritable customer:** You are likely to meet rude and irritable customers.

  Solution: Do not take it personally; they are not being rude to you.

- **Customers who reject calls:** Most customers are likely to reject your call repeatedly.

  Solution: Have patience. Remind yourself that 10

Fig. 3.26: Irritable customer
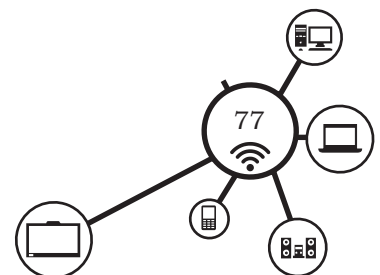
Fig. 3.27: Customers who reject calls

rejections will lead to one sale, which will add up to success.

• **Customers who do not want your product or service:** Most customers are likely to say that your product or service is not required.

Solution: Find out how your product or service can fit into the lifestyle of the customer by empathising, or understanding, your customer.

Always remember — the customer thinks — what's in it for me? So your product MUST have an answer to that question.

In general, while making a telesales call, follow these:

• Generate interest in the customer about the product or service.

• Ensure it is a good time to talk or ask for a better time.

• Give the customer something to look forward to after your call.

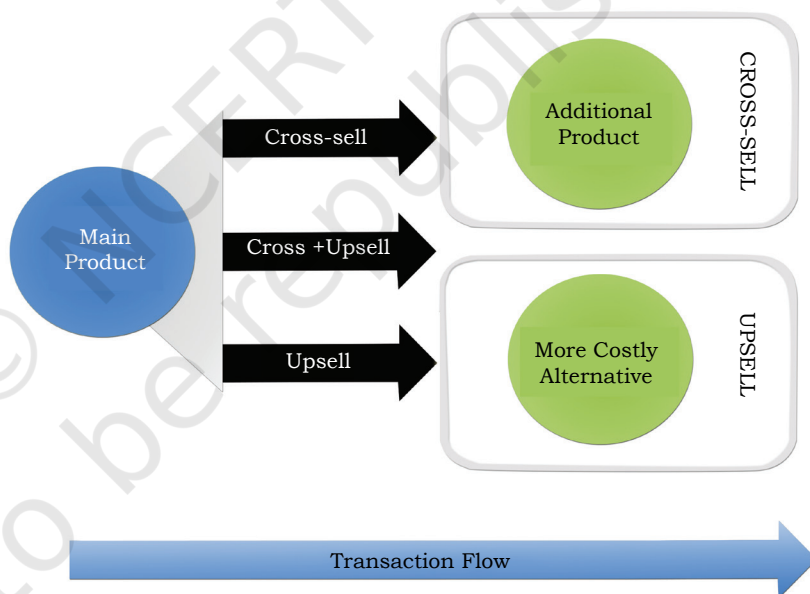*Fig. 3.28 Cross-sell and Up-sell*

UPSELL OR CROSS-SELL

While making telesales you can also implement upselling and cross-selling techniques. These techniques can make a big difference to your bottom line. Upselling and cross-selling allow you to generate extra sales revenue by encouraging your existing customer base to purchase more, or to make more frequent purchases.

CRM DOMESTIC VOICE – CLASS XI
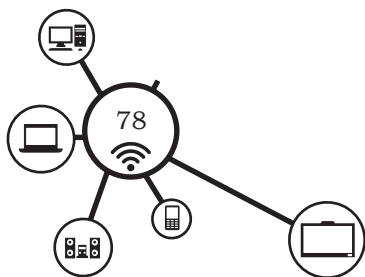
Upselling

An up-sell occurs when you offer an upgrade or addition to the deal when a customer is ready to order a product or has already made a purchase from you.

Let's suppose that an existing customer of a telecom service calls to report a lost or stolen phone. In such a case, we will first help the customer in blocking the lost phone and then offer them to take an insurance on the phone so that if it is ever lost again it will be covered.

Cross-selling

Cross-selling is a strategy that businesses can use to encourage existing customers to purchase additional or complimentary products from your range. This can prove to be particularly effective in business-to-business selling where the buyer and seller relationship is well established.

Let's suppose that the customer is calling a telecom company for a billing dispute and is not happy with the charges of Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS), which is let's suppose ₹5 per MMS. Offer them a bundle of Short Message Service (SMS), which is, let's suppose 50 SMS for just ₹100. This is called cross-selling of bundles and leading to solutions.

Let's take a look at a successful example of cross-selling.

Sanya: "*Thank you for calling Sky TV! My name is Sanya, how may I help you?*"

Caller: "*I am calling to pay my digital TV bill.*"

Sanya: "*Ok, sure, can I take your account number?*"

Caller: "*Yes! It's 123….*"

Sanya: "*Thank you, what is your name please?*"

Caller: "*My name is Ravi.*"

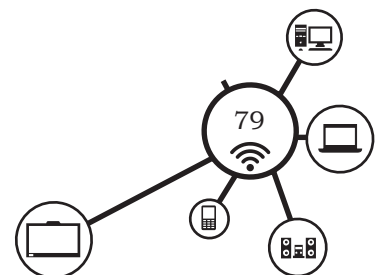**Sanya:** "*Can I take your bank details?*"

Caller: "*Yes it's _____*"

Sanya: "*Thank you, I have taken the payment.*"

Caller: "*Thank you.*"

Sanya: "*I would like to tell you that we have started a new service, where you can watch any five movies of your choice in a month only at ₹50 per month. Would you be interested in trying it? I'll give you free service for 15 days.*"

79

Caller: "*Oh okay, what all movies can I watch*"

Sanya: "*We have a collection of 20K movies both Hollywood and Bollywood. You can select the movie online and we will play it for you as per the request.*"

Caller: "*Oh! That's wonderful.* "

Sanya: "*Go to this web address: skytv.com* "

Caller: "*Okay please add this service.*"

Sanya: "*Sounds great, I have taken the request, let me tell you that you have taken a good decision. Is there anything else I may help you with?*

Caller: "*No. Thank you.*"

Sanya: "*Okay, Have a nice day. Bye*"


Tips

Here, we've put together some simple tips to avoid common mistakes while cross-selling and up-selling to your customers:

- Products and services recommended through upselling and cross-selling must be relevant to the customer's needs. So, listen for cues and respond appropriately.
- To upsell or cross-sell successfully, you must be able to demonstrate the maximum value to the customer.
- Pay close attention to timing and context. Delay or skip cross-selling or upselling if the customer is frustrated or is calling to complain.
- Do not inappropriately pressurise customers to buy your products or services.

CUSTOMER'S SALES RECORD

Remember, equipment used to make or receive calls will be directly connected with live calls and will remotely record all conversations that take place with the customer.

As a CSR you will be trained and provided the tools to 'tag' the calls. Tagging means there can be different products for sale and there can be different reasons for the sale completed or rejected. Once the call is over, the advisor fills in an internal call survey, which will have all the details, such as what was the purpose, whether or not the call got converted into a sale, if yes, then for which product and the mode of payment, if not then the reason for the call not getting converted into a sale. If the call gets
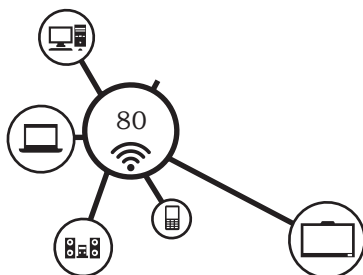
converted into a sale then the CSR's actions will be to send the product to the customer and share online details of the product and terms and conditions with the customer. Once the internal survey is placed by the CSR, then the quality team or the supervisor can pick the call from the automated recording tools and analyse the same.

Confused Customer

A customer enters an electronic shop looking at various models of mobiles. A salesperson offers help.

Salesperson: *"Can I help you, Sir?*

Customer: *"Yes, I wanted to buy a mobile phone... uh ... hey these laptops look good! Please show me a good laptop.... And are these iPads? "*

Salesperson: *"Yes Sir. Let me show you some of the iPad models."*

Customer: *"uh... okay.... Let me just take a look at the other products in the store. I'll come back to you later! Thanks. (Leaves the store) "*
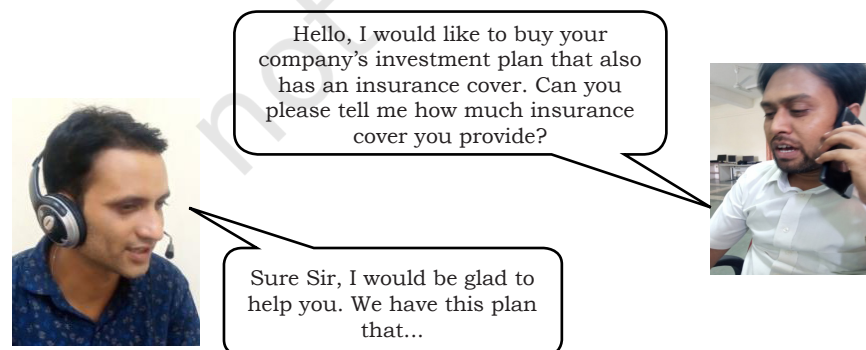
It is clear that the customer had no specific need or requirement. The customer was casually asking about different models of mobile phones, laptops and iPads. The customer could not seem to decide what to buy or whether to buy.

Characteristics of a Confused Customer

Here are two scenarios to help you understand who a confused or wandering customer is.

Scenario 1

A customer calls up to inquire about a new investment scheme.

> Hello, I would like to buy your company's investment plan that also has an insurance cover. Can you please tell me how much insurance cover you provide?

> Sure Sir, I would be glad to help you. We have this plan that...

OUTBOUND CALLS: INTERACTING WITH CUSTOMER
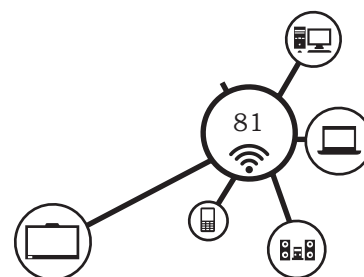
..uh..sorry to interrupt... but does your company deal in mutual funds, if yes what are the products? The insurance cover you provide?

Yes sir, we do deal in mutual funds. Some of our products are...

Scenario 2

..Do you keep mp3 CDs of old Hindi songs?

Yes Sir. We have songs from the 1950s, 1960s and the 1970s. Which one would you like to buy?

Oh great! Do you also have DVD movies from the same time?

Yes Sir. We have a scheme wherein if you buy the DVDs you get one MP3 CD free of cost.
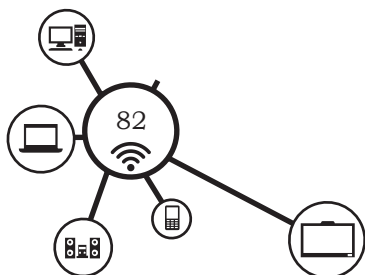
What about English movies?

Yes Sir, we do, which type of movies do you watch? We have action, thriller, horror, drama, etc. Which one would you like to place an order for?

Well I don't want to place an order just now. I have to first decide. Let me call you later.

Ok Sir, thank you for calling and may you have a nice day ahead.

A confused customer, whether in a shop or over the phone, has these characteristics:

- has no specific need,
- is curious about the features of the product or service,
- is not sure of what they want to buy,
- shows little interest in buying and
- asks a lot of questions about the product without any intention of buying.

Handling a Confused Customer

Here are some steps to handle confused customers.

Step 1: Guide the customer gently to the main offer, if there is any, on the products.

Step 2: Probe to find out the needs of the customer.

The questions to be asked are as follows:

- Which one would you require?
- What is the size of your washing load?
- How often would you use it?
- When do you want delivery?

Step 3: Put forth options for the customer to choose from.

Step 4: Recommend/suggest/advice the customer. However, do not push the suggestion.

For this, you must possess excellent knowledge of your product and competitor's products.

You can say:

- I would recommend…
- May I suggest…
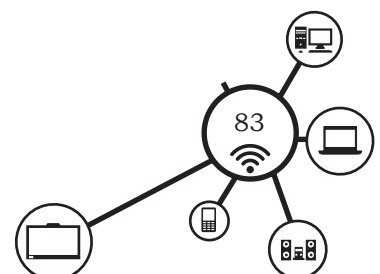- This may suit your requirement…
- Would you like to try out…

Step 5: Be solution oriented. See how you can help the customer decide.

Step 6: Give the customer time when needed. Make sure the customer feels welcome to call back with any query.

You can say:

- You can call us at this number any time for any help.
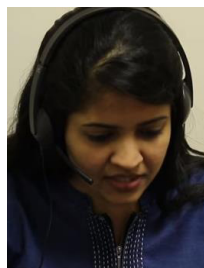- We will be happy to provide you more information.

Cost-Conscious Customer

Scenario 1

Shruti, a CSR, calls up a customer to sell a water purifier. She tries her best to sell the product, but fails.


Hello, I am calling on behalf of EverPure Water Purifiers Pvt. Ltd

As you are aware, of late, we are hearing many cases of water-borne diseases in our city. Our company has come up with an ultra efficient water purifier. Unlike any other purifier, in ours, the water goes through five stages of filtration and it does not use any electricity.

Wait. wait... first tell me the price...

Sir. The price of this purifier is ₹14,500.
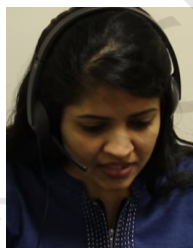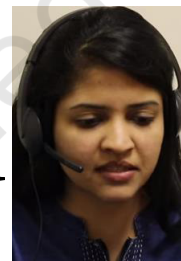
₹14,500? That's not in my budget. Do you have a cheaper model?

Sir, actually this model is the best and we are selling it as a part of an introductory offer. The actual price of this model is ₹18,000.

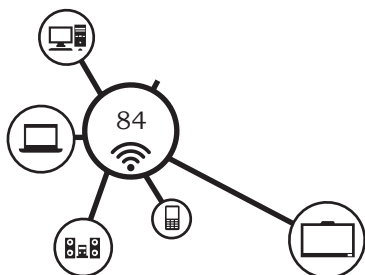No. no. It's too expensive... I am not interested. Thanks...

COLLECTION CALL

If a customer does not make the payment on or before the due date, you will have to give the customer a reminder call. Such calls are known as collection calls. These calls are outbound calls.

Collection calls are of four types.

(a) Information Call

(b) Soft Collection Call

(c) Hard Collection Call

(d) Complaint Handling Call

Let us see an example of a regular collection call. Ajay, a CSR calls up Mr Kumar, a customer.

Ajay: *"Good morning, Sir, this is Ajay calling on behalf of ABC Financial. Am I speaking to Mr Kumar? "*

Mr Kumar: *"Yes, this is Mr Kumar."*

Ajay: *"Sir, this is to tell you that the last date for payment of EMI for your housing loan has passed!"*

Mr Kumar: *"Oh is it? I completely forgot."*

Ajay: *"Sir, now you will have to pay the EMI along with a penalty of ₹1000. I would request you to pay the EMI latest by tomorrow."*

Mr Kumar: *"Yes, sure I will do that by the end of the day."*

That was a good example of a collection call. Here are some guidelines that you need to follow during a collection call.

Some dos to be followed during a collection call:

*   Always keep your pitch low.
*   Maintain a polite and calm tone, however, difficult the customer may get.
*   Be responsive and prompt.
*   Have good knowledge of the product that you are selling.

Things that you should not do while talking to a customer:

*   Never raise your voice while talking to a customer.
*   Do not use words that could insult the customer.
*   Do not give false information to the customer.

Information Call

Read the conversation given below between Ajay, the CSR and a customer.

Customer: *"Hello."*
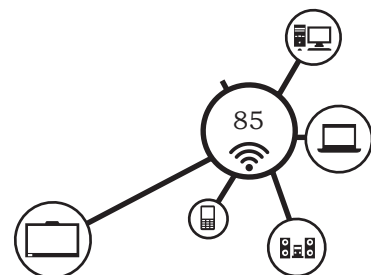
Ajay: *"Good morning, Sir, I am Ajay calling on behalf of ABC Bank. Am I speaking to Mr Akshay?"*

Akshay: *"Yes."*

Ajay: *"Sir, this call pertains to your car loan account number ending with 207899.*

Sir, this is to inform you that your payment for the current month is due on 16 February. I request you to pay the same on time to avoid any extra charges."

Akshay: *"Thanks for the information; I will do the needful at the earliest."*

Ajay: *"Thanks a lot, Sir. Have a nice day."*

In this call, Ajay speaks to the customer to give information on his current month's payment. Such a call is referred to as an **information call.**

Soft Collection Call

Now, look at this scenario in which the customer misses the payment for the current month and receives a call from Ajay, the CSR.

Customer: *"Hello."*

Ajay: *"Good morning, Sir, I am Ajay calling on behalf of ABC Bank. Am I speaking to Mr Rohit? "*

Rohit: *"Yes. "*

Ajay: *"Sir, this call pertains to your credit card number ending with 5289. Sir, this is to remind you that you have missed the current month's payment that is due on your card. I request you to pay the same immediately to avoid penalty charges."*

Rohit: *"Thanks for the call; I will try to make the payment at the earliest."*

Ajay: *"Thanks a lot, Sir. Have a nice day."*

Such a call, where the CSR speaks to the customer to remind him gently of a missed payment is called **soft collection call**.

Hard Collection Call

Here is another scenario.

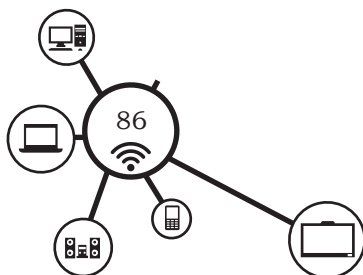**Customer:** *"Hello."*

Ajay: *"Good evening, Sir, I am Ajay calling on behalf of ABC Financial. Am I speaking with Mr. Vivek? "*

Vivek: *"Yes."*

Ajay: *"Sir, this call pertains to your personal loan account number XXXX XX XXXX12. Sir,*

is to remind you that you had missed the payment and it is now overdue by two months. As per our last discussion, you promised to deposit the amount by 22 March but we have not received it yet."

Vivek: *"I know my payment is overdue. I'll deposit it soon."*

Ajay: *"Sir, this is to inform you that our company cannot provide you any more time and cannot support you further. I request you to pay the amount to avoid any further course of action."*

Vivek: *"Thanks for the call; I will try to deposit the payment at the earliest."*

Ajay: *"Sir, if the payment doesn't get deposited within two working days , then we will have to send your name to the Credit Information Bureau of India Ltd."*

Vivek: *"I will definitely make the payment tomorrow itself."*

Ajay: *"Thanks a lot, Sir. Have a nice day."*

Such a call, where the CSR speaks to the customer to remind him of a payment due for a long period of time and informs him of the repercussions in case of further default, is known as **hard collection call**.

Complaint Handling Call

Read the conversation below, where the CSR takes an incoming call from a customer regarding their payment dispute.

Aman: *"Good morning, Sir. I am Aman, taking this call on behalf of ABC Limited. How may I help you? "*

Customer: *"Aman, this call is regarding my credit card number ending with digits 4444."*

Aman: *"Sir may I request you to provide some additional details to verify your account."*

Customer: *"Aman, I have a payment issue with your company credit card. I received intimation on 5 November saying that my payment date is 4 November! You've sent me the intimation after the payment date expires? Is this how you operate?"*
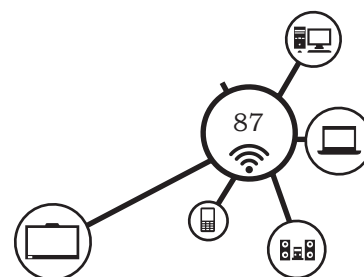
Aman: *"I am sorry, Sir; I would request you to please give me some time to check the details. May I request you to please stay on hold? "*

Customer: *"Okay."*

A call where the CSR takes incoming calls from customers regarding payment disputes is a **complaint handling call**.

Handle a Collection Call

Step 1: Ask the person for their full name, date of birth to verify identity.

Step 2: Ask if it is a good time to speak. Call back at a better time if the customer says so. Do not be pushy.

Step 3: Show empathy with the customer's problems.

Step 4: Always be polite and civil even if the customer says they cannot pay.

Step 5: Try sincerely to help the customer find a solution. Suggest or recommend options after checking the customer's convenience in making the payment.

Step 6: Always check with a superior if it is not in your authority to offer solutions, since you are dealing with financial matters.

Step 7: Analyse and calculate how the amount can be paid off. Keep the customer's financial situation in mind while doing so. At the same time, ensure the company does not stand to lose.

Step 8: Fix a follow-up action plan at once.

Step 9: Compliment the customer for sharing their difficulties with you.

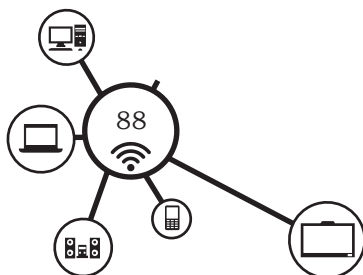**Step 10:** Always leave a number for further enquiries.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Establishing Rapport and Trust

This is usually done at the initial stage of a call when you wish to get familiar with your customer and wish to make them comfortable talking to you.

Examples
- What kind of problems are you facing while using this credit card?

- Why did you think of buying this model?
- What other improvements would you like to see in our service?

Information Gathering

Examples

- What are your requirements for this product or service?
- To understand your requirements, could you help me with a few more details?
- How is your laptop working now?

Qualifying

This is to verify whether the customer is really interested in buying the service or product.

Examples

- Sir, may I know what your budget is?
- Who else is involved in this decision?
- What other concerns do you have about our product or service?

| Close-ended Question	Open-ended Question
Easier to compare responses	Detailed and qualified responses
Quicker and easier answers	Unlimited possible answers
Easy to interpret	Difficult to interpret
Easy to score	Difficult to score
Easy to codify for analysis	Difficult to codify for analysis
Example: Do you smoke?	Example: What is your view about globalisation?

CLOSE-ENDED QUESTIONS

Closed questions need just 'yes' or 'no' answers. Sometimes, they may also have a short answer response. They help you get precise answers to your questions.

Examples

- Are you still in the market?
- May I send you the offer papers today?
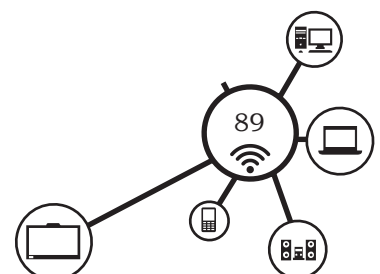
- Is this the kind of product you're looking for?
- Are you considering buying this in the coming week?
- Is this a good time to talk?
- Would you like to give this a try?
- Which option would you like to proceed with?

Here are some pointers while asking close-ended questions.

Start Questions with Verbs

Close-ended questions start with verbs, such as 'are', 'will', 'is', 'have', 'did', and even with 'aren't', 'didn't' and 'won't'. These questions bring the conversation gradually to a single point or decision. They are answered with 'yes' or 'no'.

You use such questions when you want to narrow down the conversation and get specific answers that lead you to a conclusion.

To get Specific Answers

You can use close-ended questions to get specific answers.
Examples

- Will you be making a decision within the next week about buying this mobile phone?
- Is this the kind of bike that you are looking for?
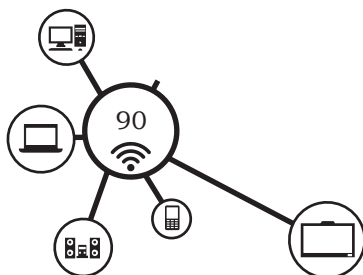
To Force Customers to take a Stand

A close-ended question forces the customer to make a decision.
Examples

- Do you like this offer that I just told you about?
- Does this satisfy your need of buying a mobile phone with the features that you are looking for?
- Would you like to get this scheme right away?

Tip
- Ask close-ended questions in a warm, friendly and curious tone. Always be courteous, caring and concerned.

COMPLAINT

"My SIM card is not working. It always shows network unavailable."

"I was promised the delivery of books in two days, but it is more than a week now and I still haven't received the books."

"The laptop that I bought from your store has a scratch on the screen and its keys are not working."

These phrases are an expression of complaints against the product or service. In other words, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made by a customer against a product they have purchased or service they have availed. Therefore, a complaint is the customer's response when they feel cheated or when the product or service bought by them is not up to the standards promised.
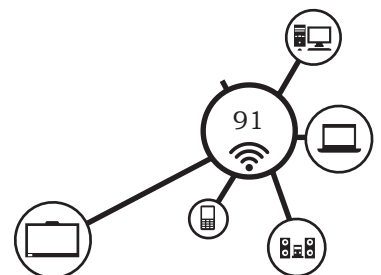
Customer Complaint

As a CSR you need to know that a customer will not complain without reason. A customer complains when they are either dissatisfied with the product or the product has not met their expectations. Apart from these there are many other reasons. Read through this scenario to find out.

Mr Sharma was offered a credit card. He is not happy with the service. Let's see what happened when he called.
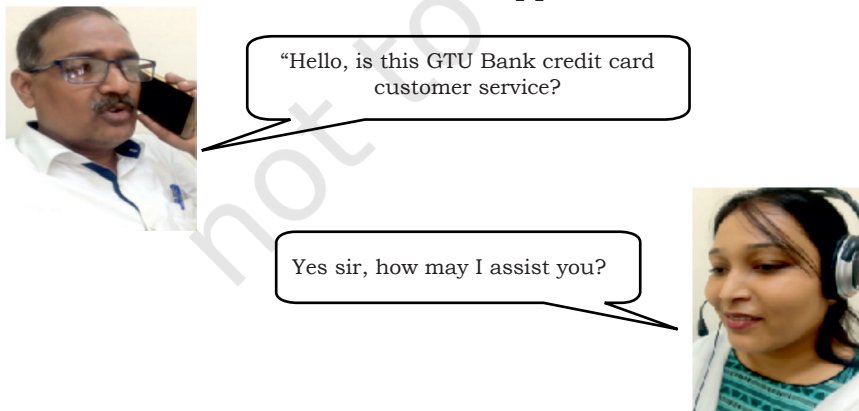
"Hello, is this GTU Bank credit card customer service?

Yes sir, how may I assist you?

Now let us look at the reasons for the complaint in this scenario:

- The credit card company did not keep their promise of giving the customer a credit limit of ₹15,000.
- The product did not do what it was supposed to do.
- The customer had to face embarrassment because of the poor service.
- Complete and correct information was not provided, which resulted in unrealistic expectations of the customer.
- The customer service was very poor. The customer had been trying to get through on the phone for two days.
- The CSR neither admitted nor apologised for the slip-up.

Handle Complaints Effectively

Unhappy customers are bad news for the company and it takes only one of them to spoil the reputation of a company. Whatever be the cause of complaint, the customer is still an asset for the company. It is your responsibility as a CSR to resolve their complaints. If complaints are not handled properly, customers are not likely to return. Worse still, they will tell their friends not to, either. Research shows that
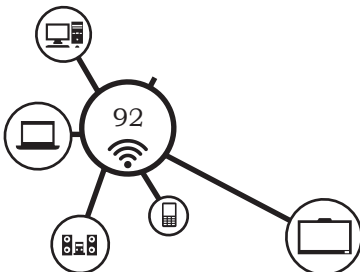
customers whose complaints are not handled effectively are likely to tell eight to 10 people about it. Let us learn how to handle complaints effectively through this scenario.

Sanaya gets a complaint call from a customer Mrs Rao. This time she handles the customer complaint so well that the customer reaches an agreement, which is acceptable to her as well as to the company.

I had bought an mp3 player from your company. It has a lot of problems, the mp3 CDs do not play, the USB port is shaking and only three speakers are working instead of four.

I am sorry Mr Rao for the inconvenience caused to you. I will put a request right away for the technician to come and check your device.
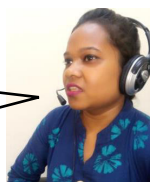
No no, I am not at all happy with your product. It's only two months since I bought it and so many problems have cropped up. I want my money back or the product replaced.

Sir I can understand your anger. We have a replacement warranty for one year and since your device is only two months old, I will see to it that your mp3 player is replaced in a week's time.
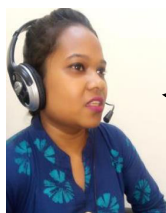
After a week...

Hello this is Sanaya from HTR Electronics, am I speaking with Mr Rao?
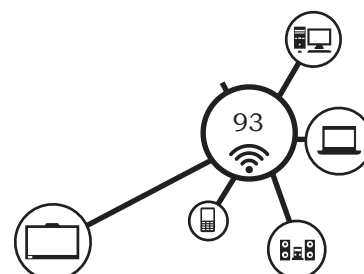
Yes...

Sir I hope your defective mp3 player has been replaced and the new player is working fine.

I got the replacement and the mp3 player is working fine. Thanks.

OUTBOUND CALLS: INTERACTING WITH CUSTOMER

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From these scenarios you can see that the CSR:

- listened to the customer's complaints intently and did not interrupt. This made the customer feel that she is being heard.
- sincerely apologised to the customer for the trouble caused. Gave a prompt solution to the customer in the form of a replacement warranty.
- entered into an agreement with the customer that was acceptable to her as well as beneficial to the company.
- promised the customer to get the defective product replaced in one week.
- followed it up after a week to ensure that the customer's complaint is closed.

Tips

Dos	Don'ts
Listen to the complaint.	DO NOT argue with your customer.
Follow up to ensure the complaint is closed.	DO NOT make false promises.
Solve the complaint promptly.	DO NOT ever think losing one customer will not affect the company.
Apologise for the complaint.	DO NOT ever be rude or defensive.

Handle Objections Effectively

As a CSR, you will have to develop a knack for handling customer objections. Let's us take a look at some common objections posed by the customers.

Situation 1

Customer: *"I am not interested, we are happy with our current provider."*

Sanya: *"Great! That is exactly what we heard from our most valuable clients before they switched. Our 10 minute conversation will highlight our history of delivering results whenever you decide to switch. How does this coming Tuesday at 2:00 pm sound?"*

'Whenever' allows for a less intimidating reason for the call.
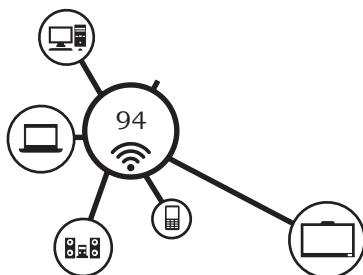
Situation 2

Customer: *"There is no way you can do better than our current provider, what is your cost?"*

Sanya: *"Very good question! I am glad that you asked about the cost. I will make sure that my manager will start the face-to-face conversation by addressing the cost and compare the cost with your existing provider. How does this coming Tuesday at 2:00 pm sound?"*

While it may be tempting to get into the actual cost discussion over the phone, or any preliminary information about cost and pricing, our pure and simple suggestion on this topic is 'Don't do it'. Unless your prospect gets into the right mindset to discuss your product or service at the time of your appointment, they are not ready to hear about your company and everything you will say at this stage will be used as an excuse to terminate the call and not schedule an appointment.

Let's take a look at some other common objections posed by the customer and how you can overcome them.

Budget: "We just don't have the budget."

Regardless of who you're targeting, pricing is one of the most prevalent objections to a sale. For many sales professionals, the immediate reaction is to offer a lower price. Instead of offering up a fast discount, which is risky and raises questions about the value of your product, look for creative ways to show the unique value of your product or service.

The 'Price' Sales Objection: Overcome the 'Price' excuse by demonstrating the unique value of your product and give specific examples of how the product will solve a problem for the customer.

Authority: "I need to consult with X."

Even more difficult is the "My manager or boss says no thank you". Having a customer state that they need to consult their boss, partner or wife before making a decision or an authority has already rejected your product or service.

Always respect their position, but look at this objection as an opportunity to get the decision makers in the room. Identify the concern and address that specific
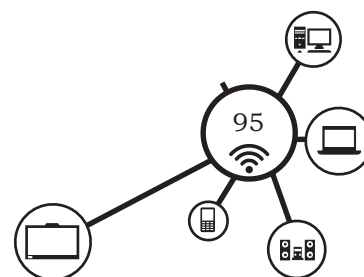
issue. Rather than agreeing to wait for a phone call, keep the process moving by setting up a joint meeting with both parties or transitioning the sale to the final decision maker altogether.

Need: "I'm happy with my current set-up"

Self-satisfaction or an actual fear of change can lead many potential buyers to dismiss a product before they've learned what it can do for them and their business. Remember that complacency is often a result of being ill-informed about a problem or an opportunity, so if a potential customer seems self-satisfied, you will need to take the extra time to describe the comprehensive problem or opportunity in depth.

If you can, bring up examples or even better, case studies of their competitors who have made some recent changes similar to the one you are suggesting. Fear of change is a natural reaction, so you will need to calm the customer's concern by showing examples of positive change within the client's industry to provide a boost of confidence.

Timeliness: "We're too busy right now." Or Timeliness: "Call Again Later."

You've likely heard this, or something to the tune of "Contact me in a few months when we have the budget."

This objection happens particularly around the holiday season. In this scenario, you must make it so compelling for them to buy right now that they feel as if they'll truly regret passing up the opportunity. Simplify the buying process in some way and lay out attractive terms that are only available in a very specific window of time. Make it clear that "waiting until the first of the year", will mean missing out on a great opportunity.

Demonstrate why it is best for the consumer to make the purchase now rather than wait 3–6 months. Simplify the sales process and address a current business problem. Before jumping into the conversation, however, be sure to follow up with the customer to find out if you are simply calling at a bad time or if there is an actual business problem overloading the customer.

If it is a bad time, find out a better time to call. If it is a business problem, that gives you the information you need to show how your product will make the customer's life easier.
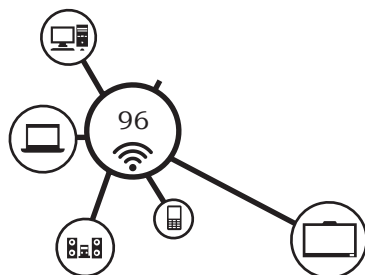
Value: "I need to think about it."

This objection is a combination of budget, authority, need and timeliness. If the customer does not see the value in the product, then it shows a lack of trust or certainty in what you're offering. Here, you'll need to build credibility with the buyer.

To create a more trustworthy relationship, come from a place of honesty and put yourself in the customer's shoes. Think "if I were this customer, what would be holding me back?"

Introduce benefits, such as specific features of the products that address their needs, guarantees or return policies. Basically, demonstrate that value. These types of perks reassure the buyer that they are making the right decision and will help to build the buyer's trust.

Ways to Deal with Issues Outside the Area of Your Competence

Despite being equipped to handle customer complaints and objections, there will be times when you will face issues outside your area of competence and authority. In such situations, you must seek help from your supervisor and peers. Supervisors, as per company protocols, have more authority and can take decisions to make changes to the systems and process. Let's take a look at a few situations.

Situation 1

Customer: *"I don't care what your policy is! I want to speak to the Supervisor now."*

In case a customer is not happy to speak to the representative due to non-satisfactory services or any complaint, customer generally prefers to speak to the supervisors. In such cases, it becomes a second level escalation and to make sure the customer is being treated fairly, the supervisor can go an extra mile by either adding a credit for the issue or adding some free service to make sure the customer is happy.
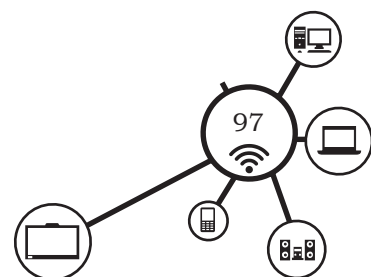
Situation 2

Customer: *"I want to know if the interest can be waived off, if I make the last payment early."*

In another case a customer wants to know some information, which is different from a CSR skill-set like legal information or any company's specific inquiry.

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Here the CSR, must transfer the call to a supervisor or a relevant person. Here, if the CSR decided to take matters in their own hands and in turn shared any incorrect or wrong information, it could lead to a bad experience for the customer.

Situation 3

Customer: *"I promise to make the payment within the next few days. In the meanwhile, please activate my account."*

Here a customer is calling a telecom company as his phone's service has been suspended due to non-payment. The customer promises to make the payment within seven days and requests for phone activation.

In such cases, where a request cannot be catered to by CSRs, then it is the supervisor's decision to check the customer's payment history and take a call whether to remove the bar from the account or not.

Determining the root cause will take some time to research, but it is well worth it. You cannot address a problem unless you know what is causing it.

Use your authority to handle issues. Sometimes, even if CSRs are empowered to handle customer issues they often do not use their authority for fear that they will be criticised if they do not 'get it right'. You must handle the issues well within your authority, instead of pinning it down on your supervisor.

Keep up-to-date and make sure you have a thorough knowledge base. If you have knowledge at your fingertips, you will be more confident about taking decisions.

> **Tips**
>
> There will be several other issues outside the scope of your authority. Remember, you must never commit to something you cannot offer or do. If you face a dilemma, it is best to escalate the issue to your supervisor. However, avoid escalating calls every time you hit a little bump. Here are some tips to avoid or reduce the escalated calls.
>
> - **Solicit real-time help:** You must seek real-time support to resolve challenging calls. Support staff like the lead CSR will readily provide immediate assistance and support concerning unique customer inquiries. However, avoid asking the representative sitting next to you for advice on what to do about a customer's issue.
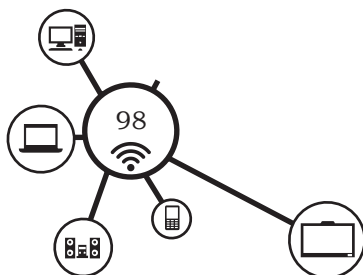
- **Manage your emotions:** Avoid losing emotional control. Sometimes, you will face demanding customers who will even use abusive language. In such situations, ask the customer to calm down using a polite but a stern tone. If the customer continues to use foul language, ask your supervisor to intervene.
- **Escalate when you have to:** Remember, some customers will insist on talking with the supervisor despite your best efforts to persuade the customer that you can handle their problem. In such a case it is best to let the customer have their way.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple choice questions
(You can choose more than one answer)

1. How will you greet customers over the phone?
   (a) "Hi, I am Kunal, I belong to ABC Telecom ."
   (b) "Good morning, my name is Kunal and I am calling on behalf of ABC Telecom."
   (c) "Is it Mr Jay? How are you doing, I am Kunal from ABC."
   (d) "I hope you know my name, it is Kunal and I am from ABC Telecom."

2. How will you respond when you get a call from the customer?
   (a) "Who is it?"
   (b) "What is your name and what do you want?"
   (c) "Hello this is Aarti from Airfin Telecom, how may I assist you?
   (d) "Tell your name".

3. If you are sitting and your supervisor comes to you for a discussion, how will you respond?
   (a) Stand up and respond while maintaining eye contact.
   (b) Respond without getting up.
   (c) Respond by leaning forward while sitting.
   (d) Stand up and respond without eye contact.

4. How would you greet if it is 4 pm?
   (a) Good morning
   (b) Good evening
   (c) Good night
   (d) Good afternoon
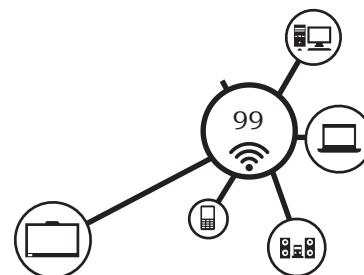
5. CRM allows an organisation to _____.
   (a) provide better customer service
   (b) make Call Centres more efficient
   (c) complicate marketing and sales processes
   (d) help sales staff close deals faster

6. What is customer value?
   (a) The relationship between goods and services.
   (b) When expensive products deliver satisfaction.
   (c) When an individual becomes attached to a marketing campaign.
   (d) The relationship between benefits and the sacrifice necessary to obtain those benefits.

B. **Short answer questions**

1. What do you understand by customer?
2. How to handle objections effectively by CSR?
3. What is the importance of meeting and greeting?
4. What is the need for complimenting and commenting?
5. What do you understand by information security?
6. What are call centre metrics?
7. How to maximise conversion rate and increase your overall sales volume?
8. Define Upsell and Cross-Sell.
9. What is a complaint?
10. What are the characteristics of a confused customer?
11. What do you understand by information call and hard calls?
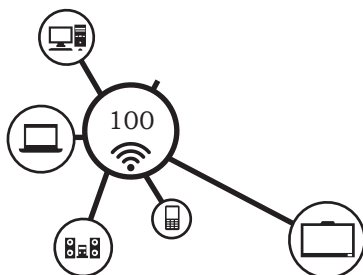12. How to manage a collection call?

Practical Exercise

Introduce yourself in front of the class.

Material required
Mice

Procedure
- First try to make eye contact in a firm and attracting manner.
- Then simply introduce yourself like ' Hello, I'm Sumit.
- While doing the above do not forget to either shake hands or wave a 'Hi'.
- Give a basic information about yourself.
- Find out what interests the other.
- Listen to them carefully.